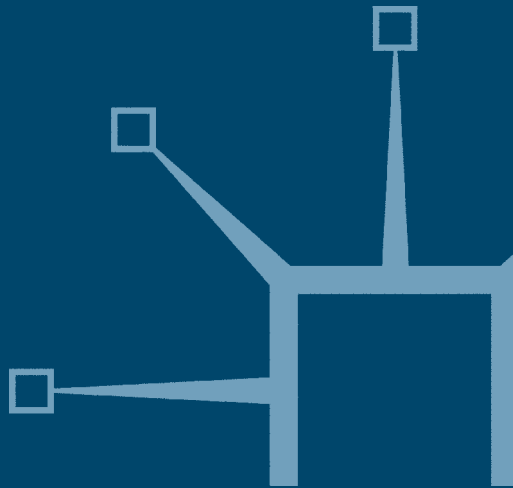


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Children of Islam

Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society

Avner Giladi



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Children of Islam

Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society

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MACMILLAN St Antony's College, Oxford

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Preface

The studies collected in this volume are the fruit of research carried out in recent years. They started as a doctoral dissertation on al-Ghazālī's educational thought at the Hebrew University under the supervision of Professor Hava Lazarus-Yafeh and Professor Aharon F. Kleinberger, to whom I am greatly indebted.

Although in his many writings al-Ghazālī dealt mainly with questions of 'higher education' and the methods of preparing young believers for the Ṣūfī way of life, he dedicated a chapter in his *magnum opus* – *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* – to childrearing and child education in addition to many shorter references to children, childhood and parent-child relationships. Al-Ghazālī's thought in this area, particularly the ways in which he used, elaborated and interwove Hellenistic ideas into an Islamic worldview (see Chapter 4) attracted my attention and urged me to learn more of concepts of childhood and attitudes towards children prevalent in medieval Muslim society. I then discovered that children and childhood are dealt with by medieval Muslim writers not only from the ethical-pedagogical but also from the legalistic, the theological and the medical points of view, and that they are referred to in many works of *belles-lettres* and poetry (see Introduction). On the other hand, it soon became clear that these rather rich materials were almost totally ignored by orientalists and that nothing parallel to Family History and History of Childhood, developed by historians of the West (much under the influence of Philippe Ariès's *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime*, first published in Paris in 1960,¹) existed within the framework of Islamic Studies.

Two years in Oxford, as an Israeli Fellow at St Antony's College and Senior Associate Member of the Middle East Centre gave my research a great impetus. The rich collections of printed books and manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, as well as the libraries of the Oriental Institute, the Middle East Centre and the Department of Social Anthropology, and the unstinting help of the staff of these institutions enabled me to survey various medieval Arabic sources in search of material on children and childhood and to become acquainted with the research

going on in the relevant areas of ancient and medieval history of the West as well as in anthropology. Some libraries and collections of manuscripts outside Oxford, such as the British Library, the Library of the SOAS, the Library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London, and the Library of the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham (holding the Mingana Collection of Oriental Manuscripts) were also very useful and helpful.

During this time, moreover, I had the opportunity to exchange ideas with some great scholars and to enjoy their attention and interest. Particularly inspiring and supportive were Professor Albert Hourani, who accompanied the research through its most important stages in Oxford, encouraged me to publish it and later so kindly read and commented on the whole draft, Professor Franz Rosenthal, the late Professor Michael Dols, Dr Patricia Crone and Dr Lawrence Conrad. Them, my wife Tamar and children Inbal, Amoz and Ohad, my good Oxonian friends Julie and Colin Lynes and Luke Treadwell, and Mike Bilson I should like to thank for their visible and invisible shares in this work. My thanks are due also to my friend Dick Bruggeman, and particularly to Mrs Marion Lupu for their help in editing and improving my English style, help which has been given with so much dedication and good will. Also, I appreciate very much the financial support given to my research first by St Antony's College and The Wellcome Trust, and during the last two years by the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

The justification for the structure of this volume, originally planned as a monograph, is twofold: first, the conviction that History of Childhood in Islam is still in its infancy and that this research, having taken almost the first steps in the field, has left so many sources untouched, makes the idea of a monograph at this stage too pretentious. It leaves only one reasonable way to tackle the subject now – namely, to deal with some of its specific and well-defined aspects. And secondly, the fact that earlier versions of five out of eight of the following studies have already been published does not decrease the potential usefulness of this volume. On the contrary, the papers, having been published in journals of different interests – from Oriental Studies through Judaica to History of Medicine – by being gathered under one roof, as it were, can become available to scholars of various fields who might find the subject of interest.

I hope that this collection will serve as a starting point for a more systematic and comprehensive study of a fascinating subject which is also indispensable for the understanding of the history of Islamic civilisation.

AVNER GILADI

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I wish to thank the editors of the following journals for permitting me to reprint new versions or parts of my articles:

‘Some Notes on *Tahnik* in Medieval Islam’, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (The University of Chicago) 47(1988), pp. 175–9.

‘Concepts of Childhood and Attitudes towards Children in Medieval Islam: A Preliminary Study with Special Reference to Reactions to Infant and Child Mortality’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 32(1989), pp. 121–52.

‘Some Observations on Infanticide in Medieval Muslim Society’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Cambridge University Press) 22(1990), pp. 185–200.

‘*Ṣabr* (Steadfastness) of Bereaved Parents: A Motif in Medieval Muslim Consolation Treatises and Some Parallels in Jewish Writings’, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 80(1989) p. 35–48.

‘Infants, Children and Death in Medieval Muslim Society: Some Preliminary Observations’, *Journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine* 3(1990), pp. 345–68.

1 Introduction: History of Childhood in Islam

In 'Child Psychology in Islam', an article full of information and insights, and unique in the field of Islamic Studies from the point of view of the subject, Franz Rosenthal draws attention to the importance of History of Childhood or rather History of the Idea of Childhood:

In order to gain an understanding of the concept of the world and of man that prevails in a given civilization it is quite useful to observe the attitude of the representatives of that civilization toward the child, as that attitude reflects the general outlook on many fundamental problems of human relationships.¹

Rosenthal's reflections move along the lines of the theories developed by historians of European childhood without attaching, however, much importance to the psychological aspects in the strictest sense of the word, emphasised by psychohistorians. What they call 'the psychogenic theory of history' states that

it is not 'economic class' nor 'social class' but 'psychoclass' – shared childrearing modes – that is the real basis for understanding motivation in history. . . . Rather than (history) being mainly about adult men's activities you will see how history is first determined in families by women and children as well as by men, and only later on reflected in adult public activities. . . .²

Even without fully accepting this theory one cannot totally dismiss the assumption that some relationship exists between the ways of childrearing in a given society and certain characteristics of that society in general. And, as DeMause puts it: 'A society's childrearing practices are . . . the very condition for the transmission and development of all other cultural elements. . . .'³

This is by no means a new observation. Thinkers such as Plato and St Augustine are said to have been aware of it. The

latter is credited with the saying: 'Give me other mothers and I will give you another world'.⁴ And a closer example: In a chapter in the *Muqaddima* ['Prolegomena'], titled 'Severity to students does them harm', Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) analyses the effects of educational methods involving the oppression and physical punishment of children on their later personality and thus on the nature of the community as a whole:

It makes them feel oppressed and causes them to lose their energy. It makes them lazy and induces them to lie and be insincere. That is, their outward behaviour differs from what they are thinking. . . . Thus they are taught deceit and trickery. This becomes their custom and character. They lose the quality that goes with social and political organization and makes people human, namely (the desire to) protect and defend themselves and their homes, and they become dependent on others. . . .

And Ibn Khaldūn's educational conclusion is: 'Thus a teacher must not be too severe towards his pupil, nor a father toward his son, in educating them'. . .⁵

Little scholarly attention has been devoted to childhood in past societies outside the domain of classical antiquity, Europe from the Middle Ages to modern times, and North America. Thus scholars have not only ignored an important aspect of non-western civilisations in the past – very interesting and significant in itself – but have also deprived themselves of an essential comparative perspective.⁶

The History of Childhood in medieval Islamic society – another area ignored by western historians with very few exceptions⁷ – has attracted some attention from Muslim scholars. This fact is reflected in the special bibliography compiled by the biographer and bibliographer Kūrīs 'Awwād under the title *al-Ṭufūla wa-al-atfāl fī al-maṣādir al-'arabiyya al-qadīma wa'l-ḥadītha* ['Childhood and Children in Ancient and Contemporary Arabic Sources'].⁸ Some three-hundred-and-fifty entries are mentioned in the bibliography, including classical texts and contemporary research works on childhood in medieval Islam. These research works, however, lack any reference to the methodology developed by historians of childhood in the West and to their findings.

Though often problematical, the sources available for the History of Childhood in medieval and early modern Europe are varied and abundant. They include childrearing advice literature – such as moral, pedagogical and medical tracts – works of hagiography, confessional manuals, encyclopedias, religious sermons, works of art and *belles-lettres*,⁹ all reflecting concepts of childhood on the abstract, theoretical level. There also exist, on the other hand, sources which offer a much more realistic picture of children's lives. These include biographies (mainly saints' *Lives*), autobiographies and diaries, court records and coroners' rolls, ecclesiastical legislation, inquisition records, and manorial surveys.¹⁰

Today's researchers into medieval Muslim society totally lack some of the sources mentioned above; other sources are sometimes less promising from the point of view of History of Childhood. Thus,

although one can trace several different kinds of autobiographical writing in classical Arabic, we rarely find anything which approaches the modern Western idea of an autobiography. Arabic autobiographies . . . were not comprehensive accounts of the author's life, nor were they written as expressions of his personality.¹¹

Biographies, although constituting a vast branch of Arabic literature, contain little information on childhood. Their authors (like the authors of autobiographies) viewed a person as a type rather than as an individual and were not aware of the development of a person's character.¹² If anything is mentioned in biographical writings about childhood, it generally consists of anecdotes that are legendary in character. The psychology of legends requires that the importance of a personage becomes manifest as early as the prenatal stage or at birth, or else that it should be expressed by way of an event occurring in the personage's childhood. Often the child stresses the miraculous, the exceptional situation.¹³ Also, the earliest court records (*sijillāt*) in the Islamic world date not earlier than the sixteenth century.¹⁴ Nevertheless, as far as we know, they have not yet been surveyed for material on History of Childhood from that century onwards.

There are, however, quite a few Arabic sources which may be fruitful for studies on the reality of children's lives, and even

more on concepts and images of childhood in medieval Muslim societies. In addition to isolated utterances on children and childhood scattered through all the branches of Arabic literature – religious writings as well as *belles-lettres* and poetry – there exist whole chapters, whole treatises indeed, devoted to one aspect or another of childhood. These larger units of material are not only more useful as a concentration of diffused sayings but their very existence provides a clear indication of the importance attached to the subject. Another indication is the attention given to the translation of Greek writings – dealing exclusively or in part with children from the ethical, pedagogical and pediatric points of view – prior to adapting and interweaving them into Arabic writings.

Ta'dīb al-aḥdāth ['Moral Education of Young Men'], attributed to Plato and translated by Ishāq b. Ḥunayn (d. 910 or 911),¹⁵ for instance, includes advice to teachers and pupils. This treatise was apparently directed toward older pupils. On the other hand, chapters dedicated to questions of bringing up infants and children are included in *Oikonomikos* treatises. Of those translated into Arabic, the *Oikonomikos* of the Neo-Pythagorean Bryson (first-second centuries AD ?) is the most well-known. The treatise was translated, perhaps in the tenth century AD, and was known in Arabic as *Tadbīr al-raḥul li-manzilihi* ['A Guide for Domestic Economy'].¹⁶ As Martin Plessner has shown, parts of the translation were used by Muslim writers, philosophers and others. The chapter on bringing up children in Bryson's treatise was interwoven, for example, into *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* ['The Refinement of Character'] by Ibn Miskawayh (d. 1030).¹⁷ Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) elaborated Ibn Miskawayh's chapter, islamised it, as it were, by changing its spirit and framework and then included it in *Kitāb riḡāḡat al-naḡs* ['Book of Training the Soul'], the second book in the third part of *Iḡyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* ['Revival of the Religious Sciences']. Thus, many of the educational ideas in this chapter – 'On the training of infant children, their education and the improvement of their character'¹⁸ – by one of the most authoritative theologians and mystics in the history of Islam, are based to a great extent, on Greek ethical, psychological and pedagogical notions.

The medical treatises of Hellenistic origin translated into Arabic and utilised by Muslim writers, included pediatric material. This is reflected partly in the chapters on pediatrics in

the comprehensive medical compilations such as *Kāmil al-ṣinā'a al-tibbiyya* ['The Complete Representation of the Medical Art'] by al-Majūsī (d. sometime between 982 and 995), *al-Qānūn fī al-tibb* ['The Canon of Medicine'] by Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) and *al-Mukhtārāt fī al-tibb* ['Selected Chapters in Medicine'] by Ibn Hubāl (d. 1213),¹⁹ and much more extensively in the detailed treatises devoted mainly to this topic and to some allied subjects. It is clear that the writers of the pediatric treatises – many of whom lived as early as the tenth century – relied heavily on Hippocrates and Galen. Leaving aside the question of the extent to which their theories were derived from their own medical experience, we would like to emphasise two points: firstly, that Muslim doctors attached much importance to pediatrics; perhaps more than their Hellenistic predecessors did – and against this background the compilation of special pediatric treatises, apparently not a common practice in the Hellenistic world and unknown in medieval Europe before the thirteenth century,²⁰ should be examined. And secondly, whatever their sources, Muslim physicians possessed rich and diversified knowledge which implied an understanding of some of the unique characteristics of children from the physical as well as the psychological points of view.

Kitāb siyāsat al-ṣibyān wa-tadbīrihim ['The Book of Child-rearing'] by Ibn al-Jazzār of Qayrawān (al-Qayrawānī) (d. 979 or 980)²¹ is apparently the earliest treatise dealing systematically with a wide range of pediatric themes within the Islamic scientific literature.²² In his introduction Ibn al-Jazzār emphasises the importance of the topic and refers to his sources. While admitting his borrowings from classical medical writings, especially those of Galen, he points out the lack of comprehensive, systematic compilations on pediatrics. His writing of such a compilation is therefore presented as a pioneering work. The first six chapters of Ibn al-Jazzār's treatise are devoted to the hygienic care of the new-born infant, and to questions connected with the wet-nurse and the milk. There follow fifteen chapters on infant diseases and methods of healing in which the material is arranged according to the parts of the body, beginning with the head and ending with the bladder. The final chapter deals with the character and moral education. The inclusion of this topic in a book on pediatrics reflects a concept of reciprocal relationships between body and soul.

Throughout *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān* one is impressed by the attitude towards infants as creatures deserving special understanding and treatment. Theoretical issues, such as the relationships between inherent dispositions and acquired characteristics, the changeability of natural dispositions, the relationships between the physical as well as the psychological characteristics of the mother and those of her children, the individual differences between children, and subdivisions of childhood²³ are discussed alongside practical problems connected with the treatment of infants. These include *inter alia*, instructions on how to treat the infant immediately after his birth, how to feed him, to prepare his cradle, to wash him and to swaddle him, advice on how to calm a weeping child and recommendations regarding entertainment and the company of other children.²⁴ Also impressive is the detailed pathology of children and the awareness – inspired by the Hellenistic heritage – of pathological differences between children and adults.²⁵ Characteristic of the spirit of the book is the image of the child – also rooted apparently in classical medical literature – as a branch cut from a tree. While in his mother's womb the child is protected just as a branch is attached to a tree. However, when cut and taken to be transplanted elsewhere, the branch deserves special protection and so too does the new-born infant.²⁶

It is hard to say to what extent Ibn al-Jazzār's instructions and observations are based on his own experiences or whether they are simply a repetition of those of Hippocrates and Galen. However, taking into account that he was a practitioner, not just a theorist,²⁷ it is likely that at least some of the theories included in his book were applied by him as well as by his students and colleagues in daily life.

At about the same time as *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān* was compiled, two other treatises dealing with pediatrics were written in two different centres of the Islamic world. In these, however, the pediatric themes are discussed in a wider context of gynaecology, obstetrics and embryology. *Kitāb khalq al-janīn wa-tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-al-mawlūdīn* ['The Creation of the Foetus and the Treatment of Pregnant Women and New-Born Infants'] was compiled by 'Arīb b. Sa'īd in Cordoba during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph al-Ḥakam the Second, known as al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh.²⁸ After discussing the questions of suckling and choosing a wet-nurse (in the ninth chapter of the book), al-Qurṭubī

introduces the Hippocratic subdivision of childhood as a basis for the remaining pediatric section. Each chapter covers a certain age, its pathology and the suitable ways of treatment, and contains some information on Arab folk-practices.²⁹

In tenth-century Cairo under the patronage of the Fatimid Wazīr Ibn Killis, a physician of Iraqi origin, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Baladī, wrote a comprehensive treatise – apparently more detailed and inventive than those mentioned before – entitled *Kitāb tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-al-aṭfāl* [‘The Treatment of Pregnant Women and New-Born Infants’].³⁰ The treatise encompasses a great number of topics, starting with embryology and the treatment of the pregnant woman, through childbirth to the treatment of the infant from the physical, psychological and educational points of view. The basic assumptions of the writer are, firstly, the existence of a strong link between the condition of the pregnant woman and that of the foetus and the infant,³¹ and, secondly, that the hygienics, pathology, methods of treatment, medication and education are all specific with regard to infants and children as opposed to adults.³² The embryological and gynaecological part of the book deals, amongst other things, with the evaluation of the foetus’s condition according to symptoms in the woman’s body.³³ The editor of al-Baladī’s text draws attention to the impressive embryological knowledge reflected in *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-al-aṭfāl*, taking into account the poor scientific methods in that period. The Muslim physicians had, apparently, wide experience and they developed an efficient system of diagnosis which might have been based on post-mortem examinations of aborted embryos.³⁴ Another part of the book deals with the treatment of the new-born infant, including instructions as to the proper environmental conditions – temperature, ventilation and the like, as well as the washing, dressing and feeding.³⁵ As far as the child’s development is concerned, physical aspects such as the growth of teeth and the first stages of walking are discussed along with psychological aspects.³⁶ Al-Baladī identifies three phases in the psychological development of the child. The first, namely, the age of suckling, is of great significance.³⁷ In accordance with other Muslim writers who deal with the ethical and pedagogical problems of bringing up children, al-Baladī emphasises the long-term impact of the infant’s experiences during the first period of his life. Great importance is therefore

attached to attitudes towards infants and the ways of treating them. In his discussion of the second stage of the child's development – the pre-school phase³⁸ – al-Baladī dwells on the connection between physical diseases and psychological conditions – what we identify today as the psychosomatic origin of illnesses. In general, he mentions more children's diseases than does Ibn al-Jazzār and seems to be unique in his discussion of the individual differences in physical reaction to medical treatment.³⁹

Khalq al-insān ['The Creation of the Human Being'] by Abū al-Ḥasan Sa'īd b. Hibat Allāh – the eleventh-century physician to the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Muqtadī – is another work dealing with pediatric themes.⁴⁰ These are discussed here within a wide range of subjects; not only embryology and gynaecology but also sexology and psychology as well as epistemology. Some of the many interesting observations and recommendations seem to be original, others might be derived from classical sources. In any case, they prove once again the understanding of a child's uniqueness.⁴¹

Turning now to areas of Arabic-Islamic literature in which the outside influences are less explicit, we would like to devote some remarks to juridical writings as a source of History of Childhood. This is not to say that other sorts of religious literature cannot be fruitful. A few Qur'ānic verses, for example, deal with the origin and development of Man, with wet-nurses and duration of nursing, with the common rejection of daughters and infanticide;⁴² they reflect some attitudes towards children in Muḥammad's time. Comments on these verses made by later exegetes as well as many sayings attributed to the Prophet and his companions (*ḥadīth* reports) elaborate on the Qur'ānic themes, add many details and thus mirror developments in the Qur'ānic concepts of childhood during the formative period of Islam. In *ḥadīth* compilations, apart from many reports scattered through various books, some special chapters are dedicated to prophetic sayings connected specifically with children.⁴³ There are, for example, chapters entitled '*Kitāb al-aqīqa*'⁴⁴ dealing with the whole series of childhood rites performed by Muslims on new-born infants,⁴⁵ chapters on nursing titled '*Bāb al-riḍā*',⁴⁶ chapters on child education ('*Ta'dīb al-walad*'),⁴⁷ and chapters on the fate of children in the Hereafter ('*Bāb ḥāl man yamūtu min af'al al-mu'minīn*').⁴⁸ Also, the discussions of theological

problems such as the putting of questions to the recently-deceased infant in the grave and his fate in the Hereafter within theological and heresiographical writings mirror to a certain extent some concepts of childhood.⁴⁹ However, the legal sources, mainly responsa (*fatāwā*) literature reflecting the opinions of jurists on legal problems, seem to be much more promising in this respect, although often discussing legalistic questions on a purely theoretical level.

Questions connected with children are frequently dealt with in chapters on rules of marriage included in collections of law.⁵⁰ However, sometimes they are raised within an unexpected context. From collections such as *Kitāb al-mabsūt* [‘The Dilated Book (of Law)’] by al-Sarakhsī (a Ḥanafī jurisconsult of the eleventh century), not only can the juridical status of the child, his juridical responsibility and the like be learned,⁵¹ but so can important details on treating infants, feeding and dressing them. These are included in a special chapter on the hiring of a wet-nurse.⁵²

As mentioned above, within the juridical literature, the *fatāwā* collections seem to be a source of great value for the History of Childhood.⁵³ Some *fatāwā* in Qāḍī Khān’s collection (of the twelfth century), for example, deal with fatal accidents involving children, with a case of negligence and with the juridical responsibility of children.⁵⁴ Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 1277) permits in a *fatwā* the physical punishment of children for educational purposes.⁵⁵ Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) discusses in his *fatāwā* collections various questions connected with childhood rites, particularly circumcision, nursing, infanticide and the legal responsibility of children.⁵⁶ And Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 1567) is asked to issue a *fatwā* on the problem of child mortality since, as the questioner puts it, ‘death of children in the plague is a common occurrence this year’.⁵⁷

Some information, especially on formal elementary education, is to be found in chapters in *ḥisba* treatises instructing the *muḥtasib* – the Muslim inspector of the market (*agoranomos*) – on how to inspect the teachers in the ‘elementary school’ – *kuttāb*.⁵⁸

However, what should be emphasised is the existence of treatises – compiled by jurisconsults – devoted exclusively to questions connected with children. Such treatises are a further indication of interest in children and the importance attached

to them. At least two works of this kind, compiled during the first centuries of Islam, were devoted to questions of elementary education. *Kitāb ādāb al-mu'allimīn* ['The Behaviour of Teachers'] by Ibn Saḥnūn of Qayrawān⁵⁹ was originally compiled in the ninth century and was developed in the tenth century by 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Khalaf of Qābis, near Qayrawān, in his *al-Risāla al-mufaṣṣila* ['The Treatise Detailing the Conditions of Students and the Laws Governing Teachers and Students'].⁶⁰ Although much of the discussion in both writings surrounds technical-legal and organizational matters in relation to the *kuttāb*, one can learn from them something about attitudes towards children, as reflected mainly in the curriculum and in the educational methods. It is reasonable to assume that works of this kind were written in later periods as well, although not many are known to us. An example from the sixteenth century is *Tahrīr al-maqāl* ['The Accurate Treatise on the Manners, Rules (of Conduct) and Advantages Necessary for the Children's Teacher'] by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī.⁶¹

Some completely different aspects of childhood are dealt with in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Tuḥfat al-mawdūd fī ahkām al-mawlūd* ['A Present for the Beloved on the Rules concerning the Treatment of Infants'].⁶² This fourteenth-century treatise is a mine of information on juridical rules and popular customs connected with bringing up infants. The opening of the work emphasises the advantages of having children and denounces the rejection of female infants.⁶³ Then comes a long series of chapters dealing with various practices and ceremonies⁶⁴ and chapters on the infant's secretions discussed in the context of purity and impurity.⁶⁵ The first part of the treatise ends with chapters on education and moral training as well as on physical-medical aspects of bringing up infants.⁶⁶ The second and shorter part is devoted to questions of embryology, obstetrics and theories of human development from childhood to old age.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya describes his treatise as unique and rare.⁶⁷ The only example we can offer of a compilation dedicated to some of the questions discussed in *Tuḥfat al-mawdūd*, is the treatise attributed to Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī of the thirteenth century, entitled *Ḥuqūq al-awlād* ['The Rights of Children, Child Education and the (Ways of) Protecting Them

and the Family as a Whole from the Fire’],⁶⁸ and even this is less comprehensive.

A unique and most interesting genre, in which there is no shortage of material, is that of consolation treatises for bereaved parents. Adults’ reactions to infant and child death as reflected in these compilations can contribute immensely to the understanding of parent-child relationships in medieval Muslim society. Following Ariès and other historians of childhood who analysed parents’ reactions to infant and child mortality in the European context and their significance, we deal with this issue in the Islamic context, in Chapters 6 and 7, using the consolation treatises as our main source.

The following list, which is certainly not exhaustive, consists of thirteen titles. The existence of several copies of some of the manuscripts may be taken as an indication of their wide circulation. The treatises were written in Egypt and Syria between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries.

1. Sulaymān b. Banīn b. Khalaf al-Daḡiqī (twelfth-thirteenth centuries), *Sulwān al-jald ‘inda fuḡdān al-walad* [‘Consolation for the Steadfast Person on the Loss of a Child’],⁶⁹
2. ‘Abd al-Mu’min b. Khalaf al-Dimyāṭī (thirteenth-fourteenth centuries), *al-Tasallī wa-al-ighṭibāṭ bi-thawāb man taqaddama min al-afrāṭ* [‘The Comfort and Contentment with Their Reward of Those Whose Offspring Precede Them (to the Hereafter)’],⁷⁰
3. Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Abī Ḥajala (fourteenth century), *Sulwat al-ḥazīn fī mawt al-banīn* [‘Consolation for those Grieving on the Death of Sons’],⁷¹
4. Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad al-Manbijī (fourteenth century), *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā’ib fī mawt al-awlād wa-al-aqārib* [‘Consolation for Those in Distress on the Death of Children and Relatives’],⁷²
5. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Qaysī (fourteenth–fifteenth centuries), *Bard al-akbād ‘inda faḡd al-awlād* [‘Consolation for Parents (lit. Cooling Their Liver) on the Loss of Children’],⁷³
6. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (fifteenth century), *Irtiyāḥ al-akbād bi-arbāḥ faḡd al-awlād*; [‘The Contentment of Parents (lit. Parents’ Livers) with the Advantages (Gained by) the Loss of Children’]⁷⁴

7. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (fifteenth-sixteenth centuries), *Kitāb al-iḥtifāl bi-mawt al-aṭṣāl*; ['The Book of Anxiety about Children's Death'];⁷⁵
8. Id., *Faḍl al-jalad fī faqd al-walad* ['The Benefit of Endurance for Those Facing the Loss of a Child'];⁷⁶
9. Id., *al-Maqāla al-lāzuwardiyya [fī al-tasallī 'alā faqd al-awlād]* ['The Precious Treatise of Consolation on the Loss of Children'];⁷⁷
10. Id., *Juz' fī mawt al-awlād* ['A Chapter on the Death of Children'];⁷⁸
11. Id.(?), *Thalj al-fu'ād fī faqd al-awlād* ['Relief for the Heart of Those Facing the Loss of Children'];⁷⁹
12. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. 'Alī al-Ṣāliḥī (fifteenth-sixteenth centuries), *al-Faḍl al-mubīn fī al-ṣabr 'inda faqd al-banāt wa-al-banīn* ['The Clear Benefit of Steadfastness for Those Facing the Loss of Sons and Daughters'];⁸⁰
13. Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Ḥārithī (?), *Sulwat al-mahzūn* ['Consolation for the Grieving'];⁸¹

In the concluding chapter of *Irtiyāḥ al-akbād* al-Sakhāwī refers to seven treatises of the same genre of which he knew only the titles. He mentions also the popularity of Ibn Abī Ḥajala's *Tasliyat (sulwat) al-ḥazīn*.⁸²

Similar writings existed in the Greco-Roman world⁸³ and we have yet to investigate whether they influenced the Islamic treatises. As for other civilisations up until now, we have come across only two examples, namely, a consolation treatise for bereaved parents written in Judeo-Arabic by an unknown Jewish scholar – Ga'on – in Iraq, apparently around the tenth century, and a title of an English compilation on the same theme from the seventeenth century.⁸⁴

In search for materials on children and childhood in medieval Muslim society, one should consult also works of *belles-lettres* and poetry. *Adab* literature which offers

the cream of what had been said in the form of verse, prose aphorism, and pithy anecdote on every conceivable subject which an educated man (*adīb*) was to know . . . holds by far the greatest promise of serving as a source for us to get behind official attitudes and gain an insight into what real people thought and how they judged actions.⁸⁵

It contains also elements of information on the reality of children's lives and on images of children in medieval Muslim society. *Adab* compilations include, for instance, paternal exhortations [*waṣāyā*] (to be found also in Mirrors of Princes) instructing tutors how to treat children and educate them.⁸⁶ Educational issues as well as a great variety of questions connected with raising infants and children are dealt with also in other chapters within *adab* works. For example, *Kitāb al-aghānī* ['Book of Songs'], compiled by Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 967), includes quite a few elegies composed by fathers who lost their sons,⁸⁷ and *Kitāb al-amālī* ['Dictates'] by al-Qālī (d. 966) cites lullabies.⁸⁸ Attitudes towards male and female children are reflected in a special chapter titled '*Mā jā'a fī al-banīna wa-al-banāt*' in *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'* ['The Conversation of the Educated People and the Intercourse of the Poets and the Eloquent People'] by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1108),⁸⁹ and al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 869) devotes some space in his *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* ['Book of Animals'] to discuss questions of rearing infants and children, for instance, naming them, ways to calm a crying baby, the influence of the nurse on the nursling, and methods of punishment.⁹⁰

Philippe Ariès made extensive use of figurative art for the study of concepts of childhood and attitudes towards children in the context of medieval and early modern Europe.⁹¹ Despite the differences between European and Islamic art, it seems worthwhile trying to utilise this source for the History of Childhood in Islam. It emerges, at first glance, that Islamic painting sometimes mirrors daily life at home and at school in those areas of the Islamic world in which it was created, and thus supplies, *inter alia*, important details on children's dress and games, on adult-child relations and the like.⁹²

One should not undervalue the sources reflecting mainly concepts of childhood – and most of the sources surveyed above should be included in this category – to the understanding of the reality of children's lives. It seems likely that, to a certain extent, these writings mirror that reality. On the other hand, they probably had a certain influence on it, at least within higher social classes.

Last but not least, testimonies from various areas of the modern and contemporary Islamic world, particularly those in which the old social structure and traditional values were pre-

served, can shed some light on parent-child relations, children's status in society and ways of children's life in the past if carefully compared with the medieval sources. From this point of view, western travellers' literature, especially that written by women who could contact Muslim women more easily than male travellers and thus learn more of family life, looks promising.⁹³ Similarly, the findings of anthropological research carried out nowadays in Muslim areas in which the traditional family structure has been preserved, can contribute to the understanding of various aspects of the lives of children in the past. Hamed Ammar's *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village* and Erika Friedl's 'Parents and Children in a Village in Iran' are illuminating examples. The ambivalence and complexity of parent-child relationships, adults' reactions to infant mortality, the differences in attitudes towards male and female children, the belief in the influence of the mother's milk on the child's character, the ways of practising childhood rites and other topics as described by those anthropologists,⁹⁴ can sometimes clarify the information derived from medieval Islamic sources. Particularly interesting is the accord between Friedl's characterisation of children's games in a tribal village in southwest Iran and the information on the same phenomenon in medieval Islam. The tendency of the village boys to play games – generally aggressive games – in larger groups without, however, any real cooperation among the members of each group, and the differences between patterns of boys' and girls' games all have their parallels in descriptions supplied by *adab* literature.⁹⁵

The large quantity and great variety of sources for the History of Childhood in Islam, exemplified above, on the one hand, and the paucity of relevant research works on the other, make the writing of a comprehensive monograph on the subject, as we have already said, impossible at this stage. We have therefore chosen to deal with certain specific, essential aspects of the topic. Concepts of childhood and attitudes towards children as reflected in medieval Islamic sources, especially legal, ethical, pedagogical and medical ones in addition to consolation treatises for bereaved parents are our main concern in the following studies. However, these are certainly connected with the

reality of children's lives; as far as the sources allow us, we refer to this reality throughout the collection.

The studies included in this volume are based on the historical-philological methodology enriched by a comparative approach towards the subject. That means that findings of social historians, particularly historians of family and childhood in societies outside the domain of Islamic civilisation as well as those of anthropologists working on Middle Eastern societies have all been taken into account while analysing the medieval Arabic texts.

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Part I:

The New-Born Infant

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2 *Tuḥfat al-Mawdūd* – an Islamic Childrearing Manual from the Fourteenth Century

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya of Damascus (1292-1350), a Ḥanbali theologian and jurisconsult,¹ the most famous disciple of Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya, is known to have been well-versed in all the main Islamic disciplines, namely, Qur'ānic exegesis, *ḥadīth*, jurisprudence, law and mystical-Ṣūfī theory.² Like many other Muslim scholars in the Middle Ages, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya was also interested in medicine, but his knowledge in the field is not confined to those *ḥadīth* reports dealing with health and medicine attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad. It was also derived, although indirectly, from Hellenistic sources.³ There is no indication that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya studied medicine in any formal educational framework; it is likely that, in this field, he was self-taught, the most common way of learning at the time, as far as medical studies were concerned.⁴ Be that as it may, the results are rather impressive.⁵

Tuḥfat al-mawdūd fī aḥkām al-mawlūd, one of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's many compilations, is entirely devoted to questions connected with infants and children, particularly the series of childhood rites carried out by Muslims.⁶ However, in the last third of the treatise the author deals with various aspects of childrearing and education (Chapters 14-16) in addition to discussing (in Chapter 17) the different stages in human life, including the foetus.

To a great extent, Basim Musallam's characterisation of Chapter 17 in *Tuḥfat al-mawdūd* is applicable to Chapter 16, which is our main interest here:

Ibn Qayyim's . . . treatment of generation in the *Tuḥfa* is the most remarkable example of a true symbiosis of science and religion. Here the words of Hippocrates explain the Qur'ān

and the Prophet, and the latter explain Hippocrates, in one continuous discourse. It is here that the agreement between statements of the Prophet and the Qur'ān and those of Hippocrates and Galen reaches its fullest ramifications. In spite of belonging to the most orthodox segment of the religious community, in interpreting Islamic religious traditions whose source is the word of God, Ibn Qayyim found it possible directly to involve Hippocrates, a pagan Greek, as one of his major sources of knowledge.⁷

For us the contents of Chapter 16 in *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*⁸ are a clear indication that the medical knowledge derived by earlier Muslim physicians from Hellenistic sources was not confined to philosophers, doctors and scientists. The case of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya proves that hygienic and pediatric theories of Hellenistic origin, among theories in other fields, after being translated into Arabic in the ninth–tenth centuries, and absorbed in Islamic medical writings from the tenth–eleventh centuries (including special pediatric or gynaecological–pediatric treatises),⁹ spread and penetrated into wider circles of religious scholars. These, in their turn, further elaborated, popularised and interwove sections dealing with childrearing in their writings.¹⁰ In other words, the Hellenistic pediatric heritage became an integral part of the medieval Islamic civilisation as had Hellenistic medical knowledge in general.¹¹ A similar process is to be discerned in the field of child education, particularly moral education. Religious authorities such as al-Ghazālī based their teachings in this field to a great extent on Hellenistic ideas elaborated and adapted to an Islamic world-view.¹²

Against this background the issue of originality of Islamic medicine is irrelevant here.¹³ A much more important question from our point of view is whether or not ideas expressed in Islamic writings on pediatrics and childrearing, and in other writings relying on them, had any effect on the lives of infants and children.¹⁴ It would be difficult to offer an unequivocal answer to that question. Nevertheless, the fact that writers of Islamic pediatric treatises were themselves practitioners, not only theorists,¹⁵ suggests these ideas were passed on to younger generations of physicians and were, at least partly, applied by doctors as well as by parents and nurses among the upper urban strata.¹⁶

But even when pediatric and childrearing manuals do not mirror actual life they can provide a record of

how the society viewed children – their virtues and vices, their needs and proper goals, their capacities and their weakness, their place in the overall scheme of human life, society, and often ‘the life to come’. In other words, the manuals provide an accurate measure of the important issues relating to children and their development, as viewed by elite groups within the society as a whole.¹⁷

The fact that Muslim physicians, writing on pediatric themes derived all or most of their medical material from Hellenistic sources does not mean, however, that they accepted unquestioningly the ethical attitudes towards infants adopted by ancient doctors. Islamic ethics cannot be characterised, like the ancient medical ethics, as ‘making very little of the life of the new-born, of merciless selection of infants, and considering sick and weak infants as not deserving to live’.¹⁸ As adherents of a monotheistic belief, in many ways the heir of Judaism and Christianity, the Muslim doctors could not identify themselves with this aspect of the ancient concept of infancy. Questions of selection, for instance, are not even hinted at in their gynaecological and pediatric writings.

However, following another line of Hellenistic tradition, Islamic pediatric writings emphasise the psychological as well as physical uniqueness of infants and children, and the resulting differences between treating children on the one hand, and treating adults on the other.¹⁹

IBN QAYYIM AL-JAWZIYYA’S OBSERVATIONS ON BIRTH AND THE FIRST STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The birth shock

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s awareness of the trauma experienced by the infant at birth is striking. According to the writer, the protective environment in the womb enables the foetus to develop, to strengthen and to withstand difficulties which he can hardly survive after his birth. The sudden transformation which demands rapid adjustment of the body, particularly the diges-

tive and the respiratory organs, exposes the infant to great dangers. In this respect the new-born infant is much like a branch being cut off a tree to be planted in another place. He therefore deserves very devoted and cautious treatment.²⁰ And indeed, in Chapter 16, devoted to the practical aspects of childrearing (see below), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya warns parents against carrying the baby around or moving him much in the first three months of his life as, during this period, he is still not accustomed to the new environment and his body is weak.²¹

While the discussion of the birth shock in *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* is based mainly on al-Baladī's *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-al-mawlūdīn* – in several places the latter is quoted verbatim, although without mentioning it by name²² – it is enriched by an original religious element, namely, the argument that the sudden transition of the infant from a familiar and protective environment to one in which the conditions are much harder, is to be explained in terms of divine wisdom. Through this transition God trains human beings and prepares them to abandon their familiar ways of life in order to move to another stage – a more distinguished and beneficial one. All periods of human life, from the moment a child is conceived until his death as an old person, then Resurrection and Judgement, are to be examined in the light of that divine will.

In his short discussion of the causes of the baby's first cry, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya suggests once again a combination of a natural and a religious-popular explanation: on the one hand he regards the cry as the result of the painful experience of birth;²³ on the other, as the infant's reaction to the devil's poking his waist.²⁴

The psychological development of the child

In addition to the observations regarding birth from the gynaecological as well as pediatric points of view, Chapter 17 in *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* includes a general survey of the psychological development of the child as part of a broader discussion of various stages in human life. This survey which seems to rely, at least to a certain extent, on earlier Islamic medical writings – themselves influenced by the Hippocratic sub-division of childhood into four parts – reflects the awareness of the complexity of childhood and of the gradual development of children.²⁵

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya is particularly interested in two phases of the child's development which are significant from the religious point of view, namely, the stage in which the child starts to distinguish between good and evil (Arabic: *tamyīz*),²⁶ and that of puberty. The first is characterised by the child's ability to grasp the meaning of Islam. According to a general view, seven is the age of *tamyīz* although there are other opinions ranging from three to ten.²⁷ By presenting all these possibilities, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya emphasises the individual differences from the point of view of intellectual development. Similarly, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya avoids giving a categorical definition for the onset of puberty. Although he regards the age of fifteen as the starting point of adolescence he recognises individual differences which should be taken into account when considering the religious duties of a young man.²⁸

Two interesting observations made in Chapter 17 on the earliest period in the child's life should also be mentioned: first, the significance of the smile which, according to the author, occurs for the first time when the infant is forty days old. This phenomenon is presented as an indication of the beginning of the infant's self-awareness and the starting-point of his intellectual development. The other phenomenon which Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya apparently regards as connected with the child's intellectual development, but unfortunately does not discuss in detail, is the occurring of dreams for the first time at the age of two months.²⁹

IBN QAYYIM AL-JAWZIYYA ON INFANT CARE AND CHILDREARING

Chapter 16 of *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, which deals with the practical aspects of bringing up children, is based on two concepts. The first is that children, being different from adults and having their own unique needs, deserve special consideration and care;³⁰ and the second, that the way infants and children are treated has a long-term influence on their physical as well as psychological traits. This idea, expressed by Muslim thinkers in both a moral-educational and a hygienic-medical context is reflected in the title of Chapter 16.³¹

Feeding

Questions connected with the feeding of infants in general and breast-feeding in particular constitute a central theme in Islamic childrearing manuals as they do in the Hellenistic ones.³² One of the key questions dealt with by the authors is whether feeding by the mother or the hiring of wet-nurses is to be preferred.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya opens Chapter 16 with a short discussion of this issue in which the common view of Muslim physicians is implicitly reflected: by advocating the hiring of a wet-nurse only for the first two or three days of the infant's life, during which time the mother's milk is said to be spoiled,³³ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya supports, in fact, the concept that the mother's milk is generally preferable. His discussion also mirrors what appears to be an inner contradiction in the Islamic childrearing manuals: while warmly recommending maternal feeding and explaining in detail its advantages for the baby and the mother alike,³⁴ the authors of the manuals devote much space to instructions on how to choose a wet-nurse.³⁵ On the face of it there is no difficulty here. It can be argued that the authors prepare the parents for a situation in which the mother is either unable or reluctant to suckle her baby.³⁶ However, it seems likely that the above-mentioned contradiction is rooted in the different ideas expressed in the Hellenistic writings in this respect. Philosophers, moralists, and some physicians, Galen among them, did not favour hiring wet-nurses, as they believed that character traits were transmitted through the milk. Muslim physicians generally supported this attitude, which was also endorsed by other Muslim writers;³⁷ they could not ignore, however, the long chapters devoted to wet-nurses by Hellenistic doctors who did not insist on maternal nursing, especially when, for one reason or another, the mother was unable to suckle.³⁸ On the other hand, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, who defends the use of a wet-nurse only for two or three days after birth, has to take into account the Islamic tradition describing the Prophet Muḥammad, who was handed over in infancy to a Bedouin wet-nurse. Nevertheless, our author chooses to ignore the fact that, according to that tradition, young Muḥammad spent some years with his wet-nurse, not merely a few days.³⁹

Faithful to his basic support of maternal suckling, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya also avoids almost any reference to the great variety

of topics connected with paid wet-nursing which are dealt with at length in the earlier childrearing manuals.⁴⁰ He raises only a few issues relevant to breast-feeding such as its frequency, the sexual activity of the nursing woman, and the weaning of the child.

The question of frequency is only hinted at in *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* although it is discussed by Muslim physicians of the tenth century. In contrast with the custom of breast-feeding infants whenever they cry recommended by classical as well as medieval European writings,⁴¹ the Muslim doctors insist on restricting the breast-feeding to two or three times a day only, emphasising the danger to the child's health stemming from overfeeding.⁴² By explaining the advantages of infants' crying, often caused by hunger, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya implicitly supports this attitude. He claims that many parts of the baby's body, such as the intestines, the chest, the brain, and the limbs benefit from the crying. It should not, therefore, cause the parents distress.⁴³

From ancient times sexual intercourse during lactation was believed to 'spoil and diminish the milk or suppress it entirely by stimulating menstrual catharsis through the uterus or by bringing about conception'. According to this belief, moreover, 'coitus cools the affection toward (the) nursling by the diversion of sexual pleasure'.⁴⁴ Nursing women were therefore obliged to suspend marital relations for long periods of time,⁴⁵ or to use contraceptive devices.⁴⁶

Muslim doctors, accepting the old theory that breast milk was formed from the menstrual blood which was not shed during pregnancy,⁴⁷ categorically denounced sexual activity, warning against the great damage which might be caused to the infant, particularly if his nurse were pregnant.⁴⁸

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, who has to take into account not only medical arguments but also religious ones, suggests a less unequivocal formula in this regard. Since, according to a *ḥadīth* report, the Prophet, relying upon the experience of Persians and Byzantines alike, did not forbid sexual intercourse with a nursing woman,⁴⁹ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya finds it impossible to prohibit it altogether. On the other hand, he quotes at length the medical arguments against sexual activity, supporting them by another report according to which the Prophet called upon his believers 'not to kill their children unwittingly'.⁵⁰ In an ef-

fort to reconcile these two contradictory attitudes, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya recommends that nursing women refrain from sexual relations during the lactation period; taking into account the experience of many children who had not been damaged, he does not prohibit such activity absolutely.⁵¹

Concerning the length of the breast-feeding period and the suitable time for weaning, there is much more compatibility between Islamic religious teachings and the childrearing medical instructions; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's position in this regard is therefore less problematical.

Weaning after two years of nursing is recommended by the Qur'ān⁵² as well as by doctors, such as Ibn Sinā, al-Qurtubī, and al-Baladī. The latter, for instance, advises weaning when the infant's teeth are strong enough to deal with solid food.⁵³ This more or less falls into line with a long tradition, common to ancient as well as medieval civilisations, of weaning infants around two years old.⁵⁴

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya is unique in illuminating the religious dimension of this stage of the child's development. He draws attention to the simultaneous strengthening of the digestive organs and teething. God is said to delay teething to the point in which the infant can digest solid food. By doing so He saves the mother, as an act of mercy, from the suffering which could be caused by the infant biting her nipples.⁵⁵

Concerning the proper time to start weaning, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, in the wake of the tenth-century Muslim doctors (themselves relying upon Galen), suggests the autumn. With its moderate weather, this time of year is followed by the winter whose low temperatures are helpful in developing the child's natural heat and strengthening his appetite as well as digestive power.⁵⁶

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, like the Muslim authors of earlier childrearing and pediatric manuals, emphasises the importance of gradual weaning and draws attention to the danger for the infant of any abrupt change.⁵⁷ Similarly, the new kinds of food replacing the familiar breast milk should be introduced gradually. It is recommended starting with bread dipped in hot water and fresh animal milk, then soup without meat, and, eventually, tender meat well-minced or chewed.⁵⁸ It should be mentioned that in this regard Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya does not

quote directly any of the above-mentioned physicians but introduces his own suggestions.

It is worth mentioning that some of the Muslim doctors of the tenth century refer to a (special ?) cup, with a handle, from which the infant could suck, apparently similar to those cups which were in use in ancient times.⁵⁹

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya deals with two aspects of the diet and the table-manners of the weaned child. From the hygienic standpoint he denounces excessive eating and, like the Muslim physicians of the tenth and eleventh centuries (particularly al-Baladī, whose instructions in this regard he quotes almost verbatim), shows how damaging it can be for the child's health and proper development. The recommended formula is, therefore, feeding to a degree slightly under fullness. This should help the shaping of the child's body and safeguard him from digestive problems, disturbances in the balance of the humours, and illness caused by excessive food, such as tremor and heart-ache.⁶⁰

The question of table manners is also raised by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya in the context of moral education. For Muslim moralists the balance of the faculties of the soul is an ideal that every educator should strive to achieve. According to a model based to a great extent on Platonic as well as Aristotelian ideas, the faculty of desire, expressed through appetite and lust, is among the major forces of the soul to be restrained and balanced. In the context of child education Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, in the wake of earlier Muslim thinkers, denounces any form of excess, be it in regard to eating, sleeping, or social intercourse between the child and other people.⁶¹

Swaddling

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya follows a tradition of swaddling present in classical writings as well as in medieval Islamic medical treatises. The notion, expressed by Soranus, that 'the swaddling serves to firm up the body and prevent malformations'⁶² was accepted by Muslim doctors of the tenth and eleventh centuries. From their instructions it emerges that parents at that time, like those in the ancient world, were urged to swaddle their infants with bands and strings tightly around their arms,

ankles, knees and even their head.⁶³ Certainly, this way of swaddling caused discomfort and suffering to the child and, as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya himself admits, may have been a cause, among others, of physical retardation in children.⁶⁴ Be that as it may, it was considered essential for the proper shaping of the children's body. However, there is no indication in Islamic sources that swaddling was regarded as a means 'to restrain an evil being'.⁶⁵

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's advice to swaddle infants until their body becomes firm and their limbs strong enough falls into line with the ancient as well as the medieval 'medical theory of humours and with the explanation of natural life as a process of drying-out or consumption of the radical moisture from the seminal fluidity of conception to the skeletal dryness of death. The new-born child was swaddled in order to prevent untimely desiccation and to support his weak, wax-like frame'. . . .⁶⁶ According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, only when the child is able to sit should he be trained to move and gradually to stand up.⁶⁷

First steps

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's discussion of the treatment of infants who start walking is succinct and omits interesting details included in the tenth-century manuals. In fact, the only point stressed by the author is that urging infants to walk before they are physically ready can result in deformation of their legs.⁶⁸

The earlier Muslim doctors, however, instructed parents and nurses at length how to encourage, to support, and to help infants taking their first steps. Al-Qurṭubī, for instance, recommends the use of a wooden baby-walker on wheels, adapted to the size of the child. Moreover, he mentions an Arabic term – *ḥāl* – to designate this device; this indicates that it was in actual use among Muslims, not merely copied from Hellenistic writings.⁶⁹

Al-Qurṭubī describes the spontaneous efforts made by infants to stand up and to walk alongside walls, as well as their fears involved in this experience. He advises parents and nurses to look after the infant carefully at this phase but, at the same time, to encourage and support him psychologically.⁷⁰ Other doctors also recommend the gradualness of the process and

urge parents and nurses to be cautious and patient.⁷¹ Al-Baladī suggests spreading a leather cloth beneath the infant's body and using an improvised baby-walker consisting of a chair put on a trolley.⁷²

Teething

Dentition (together with the first steps) was regarded as a signal of the second stage of infancy; this notion is reflected in the schemes presented, for instance, by Ibn al-Jazzār and al-Qurṭubī, to describe the subdivisions of the childhood period.⁷³ Physicians were aware, however, of the dangers involved in teething. Thus, al-Baladī points out that fever followed by shivering resulting from dentition can end with the infant's death.⁷⁴ No wonder then that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya devotes a relatively large part of Chapter 16 of *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* to discussing this issue. He refers to the physical as well as behavioural changes in children during teething, such as a rise of temperature, vomiting, and 'bad behaviour'. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, like the tenth-century doctors, admits individual differences between infants in regard to the starting point of teething; this period may occur as early as the fifth month of the infant's life and as late as the tenth month. He is also aware of the influence of the weather on the teething infant. A cold winter and a sultry summer are the most difficult times from that point of view, whereas autumn and spring are regarded as the best ones.⁷⁵ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya calls for special sensitivity in treating the teething infant. His recommendations include warm baths, a restricted diet, rubbing the gums with fresh butter to soften them and to make teething easier, and oiling the nape of the neck intensively, probably in an attempt to treat the inflammation involved in teething. However, he avoids mentioning some of the materials recommended by earlier physicians for preparing ointments, such as dog's milk, hare's brain, or chicken marrow.⁷⁶

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya instructs parents and nurses how to cope with various changes in the digestive system caused by teething. He also warns them against letting infants chew hard objects at this stage of their development in order to protect the new teeth.

First words

Muslim doctors perceived a child's ability to talk as dependent primarily on physical rather than psychological skills. They therefore instruct parents and nurses to treat the infant's tongue by rubbing it with honey and with a sort of mineral salt – *al-milh al-andarānī* – and by causing it to move. According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, this treatment is destined 'to get rid of the heavy dampness which hinders (the child) from speech'.⁷⁷

However, the Muslim physicians do not totally ignore the importance of imitation in this respect. They advise adults to talk in the presence of infants, to recite simple words in their hearing, and to train them in repeating these words.⁷⁸

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya is unique in discussing the educational aspect of this phase in child development. Regarding it as a suitable starting-point for religious education, he urges parents and nurses not only to repeat simple phrases and words in the child's presence, but also to recite for his benefit religious creeds.⁷⁹ These should be, according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, the first meaningful sounds to be heard by infants. From this point of view the child's name plays an important role. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya recommends names, such as 'Abdallāh (God's servant), whose real religious meaning the child will grasp when he is older. Interestingly enough, the author refers to a custom said to have been prevalent among Middle Eastern Jews to call their boys 'Imanuel (God is with us) thus imparting to their offspring a basic religious idea in their early infancy.⁸⁰

Child psychology and education

A remarkable feature of some of the Islamic pediatric and childrearing treatises is their wholeness in the sense that they deal, side by side, with physical-medical and psychological-pedagogical questions. This seems to be a reflection of the integral concept of the human being held by Hellenistic philosophers and physicians. Thus the Muslim doctors not only pay attention to the psychological aspects of infant and child treatment but also devote special chapters to moral education.

The notion of interdependent relations between soul and body in the context of childrearing is reflected in the title of Chapter 46 in al-Baladī's *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*: . . . 'Setting the

(child's) character aright is beneficial in maintaining his health; the ways by which bad character develops in order to make people guarded against them; the illnesses caused by bad character'. And the following chapters (47, 48), dealing with the treatment of older children and youths, from the ages of seven to twenty-one, touch on moral as well as formal education.⁸¹ Ibn Sīnā, showing how psychological states are expressed by physical phenomena, declares that the psychological and the physical aspects of health alike are conditioned by keeping moral character balanced.⁸²

The understanding of the long-term damage involved in traumas experienced by infants and children is exemplified by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's discussion of the proper treatment of a shock caused by a frightening sight or sound. According to him, such a shock can damage the intellectual capacities even years later, when the child becomes an adult. He therefore urges parents and nurses to react immediately in such a situation. They should do their best to calm the infant by amusing him, by breast-feeding him, rocking and helping him to sleep; they might thus divert his attention from the traumatic event and erase its impression from the child's memory. Failing to treat the child properly can result in the rooting of fear and faintness in his heart to such an extent that eradicating them will never be possible.⁸³

The long-term influence of infancy and childhood experiences are discussed in *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* also in the context of moral education.⁸⁴ Like Muslim physicians and moralists, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya is well aware of the great potential of one's first years. Traits rooted at this stage dominate one's character throughout his life and can hardly be modified let alone eradicated, in older age. Educators, therefore, bear great responsibility for the shaping of the young child's dispositions and habits.⁸⁵

The traits praised most by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya are generosity, honesty, diligence, and restraint of one's desires. He denounces the negligence and failure to implant these traits justified by certain parents as ways to honour their children. A debate is implicitly reflected here between a restrictive attitude towards children and a more permissive one.⁸⁶

Regarding moral education, parents are advised also to choose their child's companions carefully, to prevent male children

from wearing clothes made of silk (according to Islamic tradition allowed to females only and, therefore, suggesting homosexuality when worn by males), to prevent them from consuming intoxicating drinks, from lying and stealing. From the purely legal point of view, it could be argued, children are not accountable for their actions. However, according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, these prohibitions have their educational value in preparing young people to become full members of the Islamic community.⁸⁷

In Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's discussion of moral education, like that of the hygienic and medical aspects of child care, elements of Hellenistic origin are interwoven into an Islamic world-view. Many of the notions and recommendations mentioned above are to be found in works influenced directly or indirectly by Hellenistic writings, amongst them the *Oikonomikos* of the Neo-Pythagorean Bryson.⁸⁸ The tone, however, is Islamic, and the results of the child's education are presented not only in terms of earthly life, but also those of reward or punishment in the Hereafter.

The last point raised in Chapter 16 of *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* is, like other subjects discussed in this framework, indicative of Muslim thinkers' awareness of differences existing between individual children, and of the necessity to take these differences into account while rearing and educating children. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya suggests examining the inclinations of each individual child before a decision is taken concerning his formal education and occupation in the future. Thus a child who is found to be more able and interested in an intellectual vocation should receive a different education from that of children who are inclined either to horsemanship or craftsmanship. It is clear to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya that any attempt to force children to deal with a subject they are neither able nor willing to cope with will necessarily end in failure.⁸⁹

Interestingly, the authors of the writings surveyed above generally failed to distinguish explicitly between the treatment of male and of female infants. However, the impression the reader of these writings receives is that methods of rearing males served as the authors' model from which the ways of dealing with females were supposed to be inferred. This implicit differ-

entiation becomes clearer in Chapter 16 of *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*. While refraining, as did the earlier writers, from making distinctions between the sexes in his discussion of physical and psychological aspects of childrearing, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya does not hide his exclusive interest in male children when it comes to social-religious aspects such as naming, proper clothing and education. This is in spite of the fact that he denounces, in one of the opening chapters of his treatise, the preference given by Muslims to male children.

In conclusion, Chapters 16 and 17 of *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* indicate clearly that pediatric material of Hellenistic origin was adopted not only by Muslim doctors who had been in touch with the Greek medical heritage but also by larger circles of scholars.

Running its course from the Arabic pediatric and childrearing manuals of the tenth–eleventh century to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's treatise, compiled some four hundred years later, the Hellenistic material went through a dual process of elaboration: on the one hand, it was woven into an Islamic framework by means of harmonisation with religious concepts and, on the other, it was popularised and adapted for the use of parents and nurses.⁹⁰ It should be remembered that the earlier manuals were written by physicians mainly for colleagues, namely, doctors and midwives. In *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya ignores altogether those questions connected with the treatment of the infant immediately after birth, which was the midwife's responsibility. Neither does he deal with children's diseases – the domain of doctors. However, the subjects with which he does deal are treated in a concise and simple manner, designed to appeal to a wider public.

The fact that Muslim scholars devoted special chapters, in some cases whole treatises, to pediatrics and childrearing reflects their real interest in children. As we have seen, together with many details concerning child care, Muslims writing on the subject – be they doctors, religious scholars or others – accepted some of the basic Hellenistic concepts of childhood. They regarded childhood as a unique period, different physically and psychologically from other periods in human life; they recognised a gradual process of child development, and were aware of certain definable phases in it. Since they discerned the long-term influence of infancy and childhood experiences, they

attached great importance to methods of childrearing and education; they tended to take into account individual differences in children as well as special inclinations and needs.

Although childrearing manuals do not necessarily reflect the real treatment given to children,⁹¹ they do mirror concepts of childhood and basic attitudes towards children which were prevalent at least within the upper strata of urban society. However, from Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's work, which apparently attracted more readers than the pediatric treatises of the tenth and eleventh centuries, we can infer that attitudes towards children based on elaborated scientific knowledge (derived from Hellenistic sources) and on psychological understanding were not unknown even in wider circles of medieval Islamic society.

3 On *Tahnik* – an Early Islamic Childhood Rite

In Islam, as in other civilisations, birth and then the transition from one stage in life to another (as well as from group to group, or from one social situation to the next) is marked by various ceremonies. The purpose of these ceremonies is 'to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well-defined'.¹

First among the rites of passage are those of birth and childhood. As far as Islam is concerned, these include a series of ceremonies, most of them of tribal pre-Islamic origin which, in their Islamic version, have been designed to incorporate the child into the human society as a whole and particularly into the Muslim community.²

Reciting the formula used for calling to prayer (*adhān*) as well as the words chanted in the mosque in the opening of a prayer (*iqāma*)³ in the ears of the new-born infant. By this act, it was believed, the infant became acquainted with the basic principles of Islam, and encouraged to accept Islam as his religion. However, this ceremony is apparently rooted in pre-Islamic Arab society where reciting special formulas into the ears of new-born babies was believed to have a magical function, namely, protecting the infant by repudiating the devil and other evil spirits.⁴

Naming – *tasmiya* – by which the child is 'both individualized and incorporated into society'.⁵ This act used to be practised together with *tahnik* – the rubbing of the infant's palate with a date – a rite to which most of this chapter is devoted.

The first haircut – a typical rite of separation by which the child is separated from his previous environment.⁶ It is accompanied by '*aqīqa* – the slaughter of a sheep or a goat 'as a sacrifice for the recently born child . . . on the seventh day after his birth'.⁷ By the sacrifice – also a practice of pre-Islamic origin – the infant is redeemed and the father expresses his gratitude for the birth of the child.⁸ The rite of the first haircut is performed on the seventh day after the birth when the prospects of the

infant living look brighter; it is also due to the magical significance of the number seven. By performing the ceremony the father confirms in public his fatherhood and therefore his responsibility towards the child.⁹

Male circumcision in Islam (*khitān*), as in Judaism, is a

‘sign of union’ with a particular deity and a mark of membership in a single community of the faithful . . . The mutilated individual is removed from the common mass of humanity by a rite of separation . . . which automatically incorporates him into a defined group; since the operation leaves ineradicable traces, the incorporation is permanent.¹⁰

Islamic tradition reflects contradictory opinions regarding the age at which circumcision should take place. Some scholars, who seem to be in a minority, argue that the child should be circumcised when he is seven days old, thus considering it a rite which marks the beginning of childhood.¹¹ But most say that circumcision should be performed later, at the age of seven, ten or thirteen years. In the last case it is probably designed to mark the beginning of adolescence.¹²

The prophetic reports which deal specifically with *tahnik* and other *ḥadīth* traditions concerning the theme within a wider context describe the details of the ceremony as it was performed by the Prophet Muḥammad (see below).¹³ But in contrast with reports on other ceremonies, those on *tahnik* avoid any explanation of its origin and significance, leaving much room for speculation.¹⁴ In what follows we offer some possible explanations.

An example of a narration describing the practice of *tahnik* is included in al-Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the well-known collection of ‘sound’ prophetic reports:

Narrated Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr . . . I gave birth (to ‘Abdallāh b. Zubayr) at Qubā’. Then I brought the child to Allāh’s Apostle and placed him (on his lap). He asked for a date, chewed it, and put his saliva in the mouth of the child. Thus the first substance to enter his stomach was the saliva of Allāh’s Apostle. Then he did his *tahnik* with the date (*thumma*

ḥannakahu bi-al-tamra) (that is, rubbed the child's palate) and invoked Allāh to bless him. It was the first child born in the Islamic era. . . .¹⁵

The essence of the *tahnik* carried out by Muḥammad was, according to the above report, the rubbing of the child's palate – *ḥanak* – with dates the Prophet had previously chewed.¹⁶ Other elements which seem very important are the transferring of the Prophet's saliva into the child's mouth and the blessing.¹⁷ In the *ḥadīth* quoted above, both putting the Prophet's saliva into the child's mouth, and *tahnik* are represented as separate, consecutive acts.¹⁸ In other narrations, however, only the transfer of the chewed dates is mentioned, with no reference to *tahnik* (rubbing). An example follows:

Narrated Anas b. Mālik: I brought 'Abdallāh b. Abī Ṭalḥa al-Anṣārī, when he was born, to the Apostle of Allāh . . . and he (Muḥammad) asked: 'Do you have a date with you?' I replied: 'Yes,' and handed over the dates to him. Then he placed them in his mouth and chewed them, then opened the child's mouth and spat them (the chewed dates) into it. And the child began to wipe his lips with his tongue.¹⁹

Here the essential element of the ceremonial act seems to be the Prophet's giving a blessing by means of transferring an object from his mouth to the child's. This change of emphasis may have brought about by the lack of knowledge regarding the original meaning of the custom of rubbing the roof of the child's mouth.

It should be mentioned that *tahnik*, as opposed to *'aqīqa* and even to *khitān*, was performed on males only.²⁰ Some *ḥadīth* reports indicate, moreover, that originally *tahnik* was specifically connected with firstborn males:

Narrated Abū Mūsā: a son was born to me and I took him to the Prophet, who named him Ibrāhīm, did *tahnik* for him with a date, invoked Allāh to bless him, and returned him to me. (The narrator added): that was Abu Mūsā's eldest son.²¹

Muḥammad's way of performing *tahnik*, as described in the *ḥadīth* reports, apparently served as a model for later generations regardless of whether the reports had an authentic historical basis or were merely a reflection of an early Islamic usage

unconnected with the Prophet himself. Muslims continued to perform *tahnik*, as mentioned, for instance, by Ibn al-Ḥājj al-ʿAbdarī, the Egyptian Māliki jurist of the thirteenth–fourteenth century in his *al-Madkhal* [‘Entrance’]. This book, a mine of information about popular practices prevalent in the author’s time, including those connected with children,²² refers to *tahnik* as an act of blessing practised by Muslim saints.²³

Although the ceremonial acts connected with male infants were the sole responsibility of the father,²⁴ at least one piece of evidence shows that mothers also carried out the ceremony of *tahnik*.²⁵ Some *ḥadīth* reports even include allusions to the effect that in pre-Islamic times mothers used to perform *tahnik* unaided and that only with the advent of Islam did they begin to send their newborn children to the Prophet so that he might perform the ceremonial act.²⁶

Changes of details of the *tahnik* as it was practised (or was believed to have been practised) by Muḥammad were inevitable over the course of time. For example, when dates were unavailable, people were allowed to use water instead.²⁷ Apparently, there were times when it was common to use nut oil, pomegranate juice, or honey for the ceremony. Perhaps these items were thought to be of medical value in preparing the infant’s mouth for suckling.²⁸ One might note, however, that some of the well-known Muslim physicians, such as Ibn al-Jazzār al-Qayrawānī and Ibn Sīnā, completely ignore *tahnik* when discussing pediatric themes.²⁹

It seems that Muslims in later generations attached less importance to *tahnik* than to other ceremonies connected with newborn infants, especially *ʿaqīqa* and *khitān*. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, in his *Tuḥafat al-mawdūd*, devotes only about one page to the chapter on *tahnik*. This is in contrast with the forty pages on *ʿaqīqa* and the thirty-seven pages dealing with *khitān*. Furthermore, the title of the chapter, *‘Fī istiḥbāb tahnikihī’* [‘The desirability of the child’s *tahnik*’]³⁰ indicates that it was regarded as a praiseworthy religious deed, rather than a duty. Concerning *ʿaqīqa* and *khitān*, however, there are disputes among jurists; some of them argue that such acts are duties, others consider them merely as praiseworthy customs (*sunna*).³¹ Again, the less important status of *tahnik* may have been the result of the obscurity surrounding the exact meaning of the ceremony.

Medieval Arab lexicographers mention two different practices under the heading *tahnik*; one in the context of raising animals, especially horses, and the other in the context of bringing up children. They avoid suggestions as to any logical connection between the two.

It would seem that in its original meaning, the term *tahnik* referred to practices entirely related to animals:

Hannakahu, infinitive noun *tahnik*, he rubbed his (the beast's) *ḥanak* (i.e. palate or soft palate) . . . so as to make it bleed . . . or he stuck a piece of wood or stick into his upper *ḥanak* or the extremity of a horn, so as to make it bleed. . . . *Ḥanaka al-faras*: he put a rope in the mouth of the horse . . . as also *iḥtanakahu* . . . which signifies . . . he put a rope in his mouth and led him.³²

It is quite reasonable to infer that the ceremony of *tahnik*, as performed by early Muslims, symbolised the curbing of the child's natural desires and harnessing and directing his energies, for it clearly parallels the practice of putting the rope in the horse's mouth for the first time. Interestingly enough, some of the traditions refer to the Prophet feeding animals or branding them, while children are brought to him for the *tahnik* ceremony.³³ Since the practice of *tahnik* on children had to be carried out with soft material, Muḥammad used, according to the Islamic tradition, a date, which he had chewed himself. This involved another element, namely, the transfer of the Prophet's saliva or the chewed dates to the child's mouth as an act of blessing.

As mentioned above, most, if not all, of the Islamic ceremonial acts concerned with newborn children, presumably including *tahnik*, have their roots in Arab practices of the pre-Islamic period. Most Muslim scholars did not deny these origins but pointed out the changes, generally of symbolic significance, made by Islam. Some scholars, however, expressed objection to parts of various practices due to their pagan origin.³⁴ In any case, *tahnik* seems to have been a form of initiation ceremony performed on children – in the first place, apparently on firstborn males – according to a model of a practice connected originally with animals, particularly horses.³⁵

The next stage of the development of the meaning of *tahnik* is reflected in such expressions as *ḥanakathu* (or *ḥannakathu*) *al-*

umūr, *ḥanakahu al-dahr*, and *ḥanakathu* (or *ḥannakathu*) *al-sinn*. Here the meaning of the term is much more abstract:

Age rendered him firm or sound in judgment (*ḥanakathu al-sinn*); affairs did to him what is done to the horse by putting the rope in his mouth, i.e., rendered him experienced and submissive or trained or disciplined, and reformed or improved him (*ḥannakathu al-umūr*); time or fortune tried or proved him and taught him and rendered him expert or experienced and well-informed or firm or sound in judgment.³⁶

It is interesting to note that other Arabic terms for education are also connected with the raising, domesticating, and training animals. Thus, for example, the origin of *riyāda*, meaning 'training (one's) soul' (*riyādat al-nafs*)³⁷ or 'disciplining children' (*riyādat al-ṣibyān*)³⁸ is *rāḍa*: 'He broke or trained a colt or beast and made it easy to ride upon.'³⁹ Similarly, *siyāsa*, derived from *sāsa al-dawābb*, 'he managed or tended the beasts (*qāma 'alyhā*) and trained them',⁴⁰ generally means 'the managing (of) a thing . . . in such a manner as to put it in a right or proper state . . . management, rule, government or governance'.⁴¹ In the educational context, it also refers to disciplining of children.⁴²

Even if we made some progress towards a better understanding of the symbolic meaning of *tahnik*, it would be difficult to draw more general conclusions concerning the concept of childhood or attitudes towards children reflected in this ceremony. All we can suggest at this stage is that new-born children were regarded as sensual creatures, full of desires, whose basic nature has much in common with that of animals.

It seems, however, that in other childhood rites attitudes towards children are more clearly reflected. For instance, the differences between Muslim attitudes towards male and female children are explicitly expressed in the descriptions of the details of *'aqīqa* and *khitān* as well as in the explanations given for the aims and meanings of these ceremonies. Thus, *'aqīqa*, performed on a male, involves the sacrificing of two sheep or goats in comparison with only one for a female.⁴³ And while male circumcision (obligatory according to most schools of law) is

explained as a form of purification and obeying God as well as a mark of membership in the Islamic community, female (recommended) circumcision is explained mainly as a means of restraining the sexual desire and maintaining the girl's chastity.⁴⁴

By these examples we intend to draw attention to a direction which should be followed by further research into childhood rites and their meanings in Islamic culture.

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Part II:

Child Education

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4 Al-Ghazālī on Child Education

Educational thought touches on one of the essential activities of human society, on 'the process by which a community preserves and transmits its physical and intellectual character'.¹ Since education as a 'collective technique' is a 'secondary activity, subordinate to the life of the civilisation of which it forms a part, and normally appearing as its epitome'², educational thinking which deals with the aims of education, its contents and methods also mirrors the fundamental concepts prevalent among the members of that civilisation in the fields of psychology, philosophical anthropology, ethics, epistemology and theology.

Educational ideas of great spiritual authorities are not necessarily a direct reflection of the educational reality of their time and one should therefore be cautious not to go too far in describing the status of children and adult-child relationships merely on the basis of advisory literature for parents and educators.³ On the other hand, such ideas do not develop in a vacuum; they must have some relevance to their social environment. It is reasonable to assume, moreover, that educational ideas of great thinkers, particularly religious authoritative scholars, have influenced their own communities at least to a certain extent. This was certainly the case with the ideas of Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, 'the most original thinker that Islam has produced,'⁴ an 'outstanding theologian, jurist . . . mystic and religious reformer'.⁵

CHILDHOOD AND CHILDREN IN AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S WRITINGS

Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn ['Revival of Religious Sciences'], the *magnum opus* of al-Ghazālī (written between 1095 and 1106), is one of the most comprehensive and influential essays on ethics and education in medieval Islamic culture. The *Iḥyā'* comprises

forty books (arranged in four parts), which treat every aspect of the life of the Muslim from the viewpoint of orthodox Ṣūfism. They instruct the believer in the fulfilment of the commandments, with concern for their 'inner' moral essence beyond their 'outward' form, direct him towards the bettering of his ways, and ultimately raise him up through mystical spiritual states.⁶ The title of the work and its introduction both attest to its aim: the restoration of the faith and the salvation of Islam, then undergoing a severe crisis, by al-Ghazālī himself, who was sent, so he believed, to revive his religion at the beginning of the sixth century of the Hijra.⁷

The writing of the *Ihyā'* was informed by educational considerations, described for the reader in detail in the introduction. The foremost of these was al-Ghazālī's desire to influence the community of students of religion, whose lives were devoted exclusively to the study of religious law, towards the Ṣūfī way of life, or, at least towards the enrichment of their religious life with mystic elements.⁸ Indeed, most of the chapters in the *Ihyā'* on education deal with 'adult education'. For example, *Kitāb al-'ilm* ['The Book of Knowledge'] (*Ihyā'* I,1) discusses in detail the curricula as well as teaching and study methods then common in orthodox 'higher education' frameworks (such as study circles in the mosques and madrasas); in this work al-Ghazālī somewhat obliquely presents the Ṣūfī view of the 'study programmes' and suggests the addition of Ṣūfī elements to the orthodox ways of teaching and study.⁹

Within the third part of the *Ihyā'* al-Ghazālī deals extensively, and in the Ṣūfī spirit, with the principles and methods of correcting bad conduct, conduct that might result in the immortal loss of the believer. It is the second book of this quarter, entitled *Kitāb riyaḍat al-naḥs wa-tahdhīb al-akhlāq wa-mu'ālaḥat amrāḍ al-qalb* ['The Book of the Training the Soul, Refining Character and Treating the Diseases of the Heart'] which includes a unique chapter on the formation of character in children: '*Bayān al-ṭarīq fī riyaḍat al-sibyān fī awwal nushū'ihim wa-waḥḥ ta'dībihim wa-tahsīn akhlāqihim* ['The Method of Training Children at the Beginning of their Development, Ways of Educating them and Improving their Manners']'.¹⁰

Initially the link between this and the other chapters of *Kitāb riyaḍat al-naḥs* appears tenuous, as the latter deal with the correction of behaviour of the adult preparing himself for the life

of a mystic, be it by self-training or through the guidance of a *shaykh* – a Ṣūfī spiritual teacher. But both the opening and the closing of the chapter on child education justify its inclusion in the book. The opening presents the Hellenistic view, adopted by medieval Muslim authors, that character begins to develop at a tender age and the way in which it is formed at that age decisively influences the character of the adult;¹¹ the ending describes the education of Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 896) as a paradigm of the Ṣūfī method of child education.¹² The chapter seems therefore to be proposing a method of early training for children that is intended in due course to facilitate their progress along the Ṣūfī way of life.

Later we shall return to this brief yet interesting chapter whose content is a model of medieval Muslim educational thought. On the whole, however, matters of children and childhood receive relatively little emphasis in al-Ghazālī's writings. As indicated earlier, medieval Arabic-Islamic literature at times reveals a complex concept of the child regarding the stages of his psychological and physical development and his special needs. Although some of al-Ghazālī's statements also express this concept, what he has to say about children sometimes reflects another attitude, apparently prevalent in medieval Muslim society; namely, that childhood is no more than a 'passage' leading to the 'parlour' of adulthood; it is a time of weakness and vulnerability of spirit, ignorance and absence of intellectual grasp, of a lack of willpower and of control by lower powers of the spirit.¹³ With such an ambivalent attitude, it is hardly likely that children would occupy a central place in al-Ghazālī's works. His ideas on children and their education are most often inserted incidentally to a discussion of other problems,¹⁴ and at times for the purpose of example and comparison.¹⁵ In this respect his essays are similar to many others by Muslims in the Middle Ages, treating children and childhood through isolated statements – *ḥadīth* reports, anecdotes and fables – rather than systematic discussion.¹⁶

Nevertheless, in places in the *Ihyā'* we do find passages treating in greater detail subjects that have a direct bearing on children. For instance, in the second chapter of *Kitāb qawā'id al-'aqā'id*, dealing with the foundations of the faith, the stages and means of inculcating the principles of the faith into children (and into simple believers – *'awāmm*) are discussed;¹⁷ the

third chapter of *Kitāb ādāb al-ūlfa wa-al-ukhuwwa* (on ethics of friendship and brotherhood) deals with attitudes to, caring for and education of children.¹⁸ *Hadīth* reports are cited expounding respect and consideration for the child, a gentle and kindly manner towards him, and the father's fulfilment of his obligations: ensuring his son of a good education and giving him a suitable name. In these reports the Prophet is presented as an example of one who treats his children properly. It is told, for instance, how he hastened to wash the face of a child – his adopted son Uṣāma b. Zayd b. Ḥāritha – when 'Ā'isha, the Prophet's favourite wife, could not bring herself to do so, after which he kissed him; and how he prolonged the prostration posture in one of his prayers so as not to disturb his grandson Ḥusayn who, at that moment, was riding on his back. These reports, while not necessarily authentic, reflect a certain pattern of relationships between adults and children in medieval Muslim society, or are intended to serve as a model of such relationships.

Kitāb ādāb al-nikāḥ, dealing with ethics of marriage, enumerates five rules on how to care for the newborn infant. These include a recommendation to welcome the birth of a boy with restrained joy and, conversely, to withhold expressions of dismay at the birth of a girl,¹⁹ as well as instructions for the series of religious ceremonies to be conducted for children.²⁰

It is not by chance, of course, that the treatment of children is discussed in the context of marriage, the principal purpose of which is the bearing and rearing of children.²¹ The fulfilment of this purpose is an obligatory religious mission: to please Allāh by contributing to the continued existence of the human race, using the means that Allāh created for this goal,²² and to please the Prophet Muḥammad by enlarging the community of the faithful:

To bring forth a child is a four-faceted intimacy which is the original reason for encouraging it . . . so that no one wants to meet God as a celibate. The first: to conform to the love of God by seeking to produce the child in order to perpetuate mankind. The second: to earn the love of the Prophet of God by increasing those in whom he can be glorified. . . . The third: to seek the blessing of the righteous child's invocation after him. . . . The fourth: to seek intercession through

the death of the young child should he precede his (father's) death.²³

If reproduction involves some satisfaction of personal wishes, these too are explained in terms of the life to come rather than in terms of one's earthly happiness.

Despite the relatively marginal place of childhood and children in al-Ghazālī's writings in general and in the *Ihyā'* in particular, there are signs that al-Ghazālī carried weight as an authority on child education. For example, *al-Risāla fī ta'līm al-awlād* ['A Treatise on Child Education'] is attributed to al-Ghazālī, although he did not write it; this attests that he was considered a source on which to draw.²⁴ Another manifestation of his authority is the reproduction of passages that al-Ghazālī did write on child education by other authors interweaving them into their own writings. Examples are the treatise by Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Birkawī, *Risāla fī ta'dīb al-ṣibyān* ['A Treatise on the Moral Education of Children']²⁵ and *Faṣl fī riyāḍat al-ṣibyān* ['A Chapter on Training Children'] by an unknown author.²⁶

THE CHAPTER ON CHILD EDUCATION IN *KITĀB RIYĀḌAT AL-NAFS*

(a) Sources

Kitāb riyāḍat al-nafs is one of a relatively small number of Islamic compositions that assign a special place to a discussion of character-training in the child. The chapter devoted to this theme was inspired by theories of ethics and economics, two of the three branches of the Aristotelian 'practical sciences'.²⁷ It is directly linked to the chapter on child education in Ibn Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*.²⁸ This in turn was greatly influenced by the discussion on ways of rearing children in *Oikonomikos* by the Neo-Pythagorean Bryson.²⁹ Both the connection of al-Ghazālī's chapter on children with *Oikonomikos*, through *Thadhīb al-akhlāq* and its context within *Kitāb riyāḍat al-nafs* are responsible for its focus: the moral education of the young and the formation of his character. The most important terms in this discussion are *adab* and *ta'dīb*, which are used to translate the Greek *paideia*.³⁰

The influence of Greek theories of ethics is clearly evident throughout *Kitāb riyaḍat al-nafs* both in the method of argument and in the content. Al-Ghazālī's method is a combination of the traditional Islamic discourse on matters of morals and the systematic reasoning that originated with the Greeks.³¹ The former is essentially the communication of details of behaviour of the Prophet and his companions as acts to be followed.³² It involves no systematic study of the nature of good or of the nature of man.³³ The latter is based on a comprehensive and precise definition of human qualities and a psychological analysis of the patterns of human behaviour.³⁴

As for content, the most striking example is the adoption of the Greek moral ideal of the balance of spiritual forces (an ideal formed from Platonic and Aristotelian elements). This is integrated into *Kitāb riyaḍat al-nafs* by means of interpretations of Qur'ānic verses and *ḥadīth* reports so as to ascribe it to Islamic sources.³⁵

Al-Ghazālī's chapter on child education, like the chapters by Bryson and Ibn Miskawayh, mainly contains practical instructions without a theoretical infrastructure. The reasoning behind these instructions is given only sporadically (more by al-Ghazālī than by his forerunners). Nevertheless, one can sometimes discern the connection between the instructions and the psychological and ethical concepts presented in other chapters of *Kitāb riyaḍat al-nafs*.

(b) Main themes in al-Ghazālī's chapter viewed in a wider Islamic context

i. The responsibility for and purposes of child education

'Know that the method of training children is a most important and essential matter.' Al-Ghazālī opens the chapter on child education with this statement, which he reinforces with a religious and psychological argument:

The child is by way of being 'on loan' in the care of his parents (*amāna 'inda wālidayhi*). If he is made accustomed to good and is so taught, he will grow up in goodness, he will win happiness in this world and the next, and his parents and teachers will have a share of his reward. But if he is made accustomed to evil and is neglected like the beasts he will be woeful and lost, and the burden will then be upon the neck

of those responsible for him . . . As much as the father shields his son from fire in this world, it is more meet for him to shield him from the fire of the world to come. . . .³⁶

According to al-Ghazālī, the main purpose of education is to ensure the future of the believer in the next world. Childhood is especially important here owing to the view that in its pristine state the child's soul is pure and open to influences: its qualities are inscribed upon it just as smooth stone may be engraved.³⁷ And not only is the child's future determined through his education, but that of his educators also. The mode of education may well determine whether they are to gain a reward or suffer punishment in the world to come, just as children generally may be a means towards divine grace bestowed upon their parents or may be a moral and religious impediment.³⁸

Thus the theme of religious responsibility of parents for the education of their children or, more precisely, of the father for the education of his son,³⁹ is supported by emphasis on the original nature of the soul, the crucial importance of the child becoming accustomed to correct conduct at an early age, and the purpose of education as derived from verse 6 of Sūra 66 of the Qur'ān.⁴⁰ This theme appears again at the end of the chapter (when the pivotal educational role of the parents is underlined by way of the *fiṭra* report).⁴¹ It is this theme which constitutes the essential difference between al-Ghazālī's chapter and the parallel chapters in *Oikonomikos* and *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*.

ii. *External influences on the child's character*

According to al-Ghazālī, an adult may acquire proper manners in one of two ways: self-training (*i'tiyād al-af'āl, takalluf*), or the absorption of influences from the surroundings through observing the deeds of others (*mushāhada*) and being in their company (*muṣāhaba*).⁴² This distinction does not apply to the education of the child and the sole possibility for the infant is the deliberate instilling of habits (*ta'wīd*) by the immediate social environment, especially the parents, or by the chance influences of his surroundings. One of the father's tasks is to mediate between the child and his environment and to ward off any detrimental effects. It begins as soon as the child is born,

with the correct choice of wet-nurse.⁴³ Al-Ghazālī ascribes extreme importance to her piety, especially her observance of the laws of purity of food, for he holds that forbidden foods may introduce impurity into the infant's body and affect his character.⁴⁴ These matters, which Ibn Miskawayh does not mention (Bryson stresses the importance of the physical and intellectual qualities of the mother), seem to reflect an Islamic version of an early Arab as well as Hellenistic notion that regarded the influence of the nursing woman as most important in the process of shaping the baby's character. This was probably a cause of the custom of handing the newborn children of town-dwellers over to desert women for wet-nursing, as was the case with Prophet Muḥammad himself.⁴⁵ Regarding later stages of education too, al-Ghazālī insists several times in the chapter on the duty of the father to protect his son from the injurious influence of the social environment,⁴⁶ on the grounds that 'the basis of children's education is their protection from wicked friends'.⁴⁷

iii. *The 'age of discernment' and its educational significance*

A most important stage in the child's development to which al-Ghazālī draws the father's attention, is the onset of the faculty for discernment (*tamyīz*): this enables the child to grasp abstract ideas, including the distinction between good and evil.⁴⁸ Al-Ghazālī explains the appearance of this faculty as God's gift of 'illuminating the light of intelligence' over the child.⁴⁹ Its obvious manifestation is shame, generally defined as 'revulsion from what is ugly', and in women and children as 'revulsion from what he who is ashamed considers to be ugly'.⁵⁰ This ability to discern begins at about the age of seven,⁵¹ and its appearance separates two periods. It rounds off the development of the senses ('the stage of desiring'), ushers in the 'stage of intellectual grasp' and presages the perfection of intellectual and ethical qualities in adolescence.⁵² In terms of education this development has a dual significance. In the years prior to the appearance of *tamyīz* the education of the child is based on acquiring habits through sensory stimulation only. For example, the child is encouraged to perform a certain act by the promise of a sweet or is discouraged from an act by being beaten. But from the time the faculty for discernment appears it is possible to address the child's logic and to direct his actions through words of censure or of praise.⁵³ Al-Ghazālī therefore

stresses the need to increase the supervision of the child with the appearance of *tamyīz* and to exploit this trait and the shame that stems from it in the educational process.⁵⁴

The age of six or seven, the age of *tamyīz*, is generally perceived in Islamic culture, as in other ancient and medieval cultures, as the appropriate time to begin systematic education, primarily education towards performing the religious commandments: 'When the child reaches the age of *tamyīz* it is well not to let him neglect purification and prayer and he should be told to fast for several days in Ramaḍān.'⁵⁵ Admittedly, from a canonical standpoint, the child at that age, although a 'discerner' (*mumayyiz*), is not yet obliged to fulfil all the religious precepts, for a condition of this is full intellectual capacity; nevertheless, he is to be taught to perform the commandments by degrees. In the first phase, in which the child is still incapable of grasping the concepts of God, reward and punishment, and the world to come, the observance of the laws is to be presented as an obligation towards his adult guardian.⁵⁶

iv. *The proper age of starting learning*

The opinion that education at a young age, when the pupil's mind is open and free from adult cares is a condition for success in studies is expressed in Islamic sayings and traditions. For example, 'He who studies in his youth is like one who carves on rock while he who studies in old age is like one who writes on water';⁵⁷ 'The heart of the young is like virgin soil (without seeds) that absorbs everything planted in it' (and al-Māwardī's footnote to the citation is: 'This is true, because the heart of the young person is freer and he, the youth, is less occupied, does not stand on his dignity so much and is more humble').⁵⁸ 'It is related that al-Aḥnaf b. Qays overheard a man say: "Studying at a young age is like engraving on a stone." Al-Aḥnaf said: "The adult has more understanding (than the young person) but his heart is more careworn"'.⁵⁹ This was al-Ghazālī's opinion too, and he expresses it using similar imagery:

Gaining 'acquired knowledge' (*al-'ulūm al-kasbiyya*, as opposed to 'inspired' or 'natural knowledge') in order to obtain (through it) a quality which will be permanently present in the spirit is difficult and is not possible except at a young age. At this age learning is like engraving on a stone, while the

teaching of an elderly person is arduous and troublesome. A notable personage was asked: 'What will he do who wishes to study in his old age?' He replied: 'If you launder raw cloth will it bleach?'⁶⁰

The 'age of discernment' is the best time to instil the basic theological concepts, for example, in the hope that they will become clear later.⁶¹ Introduced at an early age, such concepts become rooted in the consciousness of the child so that it is difficult to eradicate them subsequently.⁶² Al-Ghazālī provides a psycho-sociological explanation for this process:

In childhood most persons acquire their faith through imitating their fathers and teachers. This is merely blind imitation (*taqlīd*), arising from the good opinion that they (the children) have of them (the fathers and teachers), from the praises that they (the fathers and teachers) bestow upon themselves, from the praises that others bestow upon them, from their (fathers' and teachers') severe condemnation of their opponents (members of other faiths) and from the accounts of the kinds of punishment meted out to those who do not cling to their religions. (For example), the tale that the soul of a certain Jew became reincarnated as a dog or that the soul of some Shi'ī turned into a swine. Dreams and situations (?) of this sort implant revulsion in the minds of children towards them (members of other faiths) and the tendency to their opposite to the point of absolute elimination of all doubt from his (the child's) heart. Learning at an early age is like engraving on a stone. Then the child grows up with what he has learnt and this never ceases to be firmly lodged in his mind. When he reaches adolescence he remains fixed in his firm belief, which cannot be assailed by any doubts. . . . (Human) nature has a predilection for a resemblance between one human being and another, this is especially so among children and adolescents.⁶³

v. *Curriculum of 'primary education'*

The curriculum al-Ghazālī sets out in his chapter on child education for children at home and in the *kuttāb* (or *maktab*) – the elementary educational institution common throughout the Muslim world from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century⁶⁴

– in essence covers ‘knowledge whose study is the personal obligation’ of every Muslim as defined in *Kitāb al-ilm* (*Ihyā’* I, 1): the tenets of faith, the ways of performing the commandments and the principles of correct behaviour. This apparently means the most elementary knowledge, without any excursion into detail, fine points and argumentation, and without study of ‘auxiliary subjects’ such as mathematics and astronomy which were used in calculating the direction to face when praying, the times of service and the like. As we have seen, the father is called upon to teach his son to uphold the basic commandments from about the age of seven. In the *kuttāb* this should be augmented by the study (more precisely, the repetition) of the Qur’ān and the traditions concerning the beginnings of Islam and its foremost figures.⁶⁵ Al-Ghazālī regards these studies as favourably as both the practical fulfilment of the religious duties and being in the presence of upright believers, as a means of reinforcing the faith of children, who, as indicated above, first acquire basic dogmas through ‘blind acceptance’ (*taqlīd*).⁶⁶

In elementary Islamic education in the Middle Ages teaching the Qur’ān occupied a central and sometimes exclusive place. It was not only regarded as essential for religious education but also as a guarantee of the blessing of God in this world and in the world to come.⁶⁷ In the first years of Islam, when diacritical pointing and vowel signs were still being developed and the written text was not yet finalised, learning the Qur’ān by heart was also a principal means of preserving its several written versions and of transmitting it.⁶⁸

Besides those who wished to limit the elementary ‘programme of study’ to the repetition of the Qur’ān there were those who tended to expand it, but without affecting the central place of the holy scripture. In a chapter in the *Muqaddima* on child education and different methods of applying it in various Muslim regions, Ibn Khaldūn interprets the limiting approach as the desire of parents to exploit fully the period of childhood, when the child is under supervision, to instil in him the most essential knowledge.⁶⁹ According to him, parents feared that if they brought forward the teaching of other subjects and delayed the study of the Qur’ān until adolescence, they would lose control over the child who, with the impetuosity of youth, might discard the burden of religious study and so reach adulthood without a knowledge of the Qur’ānic text. As they ad-

hered to their belief that knowing the Qur'ān by heart ensured God's blessing in this world and reward in the world to come, they confined all elementary education to memorising the Qur'ān and deemed an understanding of its contents as unimportant, to say nothing of other subjects. Ibn Khaldūn's penetrating description reveals to us the restricted religious aim of formal elementary education in most regions of Islam in the Middle Ages.

Among those who tended towards expanding the curriculum, Ibn Khaldūn mentions the Muslims of Spain, who paid particular attention to reading and writing, combined with poetry and letter-writing, in elementary education. This contrasted with the custom in the eastern and north African parts of the Muslim world of isolating the teaching of writing completely from the teaching of the Qur'ān and, at most, of using writing as a means of practising reading. The major fault of the confinement to memorising the Qur'ān and neglect of study of the language was, in Ibn Khaldūn's opinion, the poor faculty for expression among the inhabitants of those areas.

The most obvious exponent of the Spanish 'expanders' was the Mālikī Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1148) of Seville, who apparently was al-Ghazālī's student for a certain period.⁷⁰ Ibn al-'Arabī criticises what we call today 'the materialist-informative approach' to education current in his day, which was expressed in teaching the Qur'ān to children by transmitting it as it was, without providing them with tools for comprehension of the text. He suggests the addition of 'formalist-formative' components to the curriculum – such as the study of language and arithmetic – to provide children with the linguistic and intellectual qualifications, thus enabling them to understand the Qur'ān and not merely to commit it to memory.⁷¹

In a note in the English translation of the *Muqaddima* Franz Rosenthal observes that certain elements in Ibn al-'Arabī's proposed curriculum, namely, language, poetry, arithmetic and debating, are present in the Greek curriculum described in the book by Ḥunayn Ibn Ishāq (d. 873), *Nawādir al-falāsifa*.⁷² There is in fact no doubt that various ideas concerning the contents of Islamic education were inspired by translations of Greek compositions. This was certainly the case with the proposals attributed to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb on the teaching of swimming and throwing darts, charging children that they

should be able to mount a horse confidently and making them recite appropriate verses.⁷³ However, writing, language, poetry and arithmetic were recommended as subjects for study also in Islamic pedagogical literature, which had no direct link with Greek thought, emphasis being laid upon the connection between these subjects and religious studies. Poetry, for example, was supposed to assist in language study and this was regarded as essential for learning the Qur'ān; arithmetic was regarded as necessary for those concerned with the laws of inheritance.⁷⁴

From the few references in his writings to the syllabus of primary education, it seems that al-Ghazālī was an extreme 'limiter' – an approach, according to Ibn Khaldūn, characteristic of the people of the *mashriq*, the lands of the Islamic east. Subjects such as writing and arithmetic are not mentioned as components of the curriculum at this stage, even though in his opinion there was no religious objection to their being taught.⁷⁵ It should be remembered, however, that al-Ghazālī's discussion of child education focuses on character-formation – his main concern – so that only branches of teaching associated with this subject are raised in his chapter.

Moreover, al-Ghazālī distinguishes between basic education, on the one hand, which provides the children with the tenets of the faith and the religious law and ensures their place in the world to come⁷⁶ and, on the other, education in the Ṣūfī spirit, which centres on improvement of behaviour and which is the start of the preparation of the novice (*murīd*) for 'walking' along the 'way' whose goal is 'to achieve the verities of the prophecy'.⁷⁷

vi. *Moral education*

Al-Ghazālī's proposals concerning character training and the fostering of proper conduct are usually guided by the ideal of balance; they intend to engender practices that should in due course impress good qualities on the child's soul, especially practices counterbalancing the forces of anger and desire that hold sway over his soul. Since the power of desire, whose earliest manifestation is the passion to eat, is the first to develop in the child,⁷⁸ al-Ghazālī prescribes beginning moral education by teaching good eating habits.⁷⁹ The underlying principles of al-Ghazālī's instructions on eating habits are restraint and moderation.⁸⁰

Satisfaction with little, meekness and endurance – the qualities that stem from balancing the forces of desire and anger – must also be imparted to the child through habits of sleeping, dress and conduct in society:

It is correct to prevent (the child) from sleeping during the day, which leads to indolence, not from sleeping at night; but so that his limbs grow tough and his body does not grow fat he should not be given a soft bed, nor should he become unable to forgo luxury; he should become accustomed to simplicity (roughness) of bed clothes, garments and food. . . . He should be prevented from boasting to his friends about his father's possessions or about what he eats or wears, his writing tablet or his inkstand. On the contrary: he should be get used to modesty, respect for others, and gentleness of speech. . . .⁸¹

vii. *Physical activity*

A faint echo of the Greek view of developing the body is present in al-Ghazālī's proposals on the physical activity of the child: daily walks, movement, and physical training.⁸² Like Bryson and Ibn Miskawayh,⁸³ al-Ghazālī merely justifies his recommendation on the grounds of prevention of sloth but does not expand on its theoretical basis concerning the connection between physical training and character development. Moreover, it seems that al-Ghazālī wished to lower the significance of the subject, regarded as foreign to the traditional Islamic outlook,⁸⁴ by making minor changes in Ibn Miskawayh's text: he deleted the recommendation on training in horseriding and added a recommendation to shorten the time devoted to physical training.

viii. *Children's games*

A degree of psychological understanding, which adds an extra dimension to al-Ghazālī's perception of the child, is evident in his statement on children's games. Games are indeed mentioned by Ibn Miskawayh and by Bryson,⁸⁵ but in the *Ihyā'* a psychological argument is added:

Prevention of the child from playing games and constant insistence on learning deadens his heart, blunts his sharpness of wit and burdens his life; he looks for a ruse to escape them (his studies) altogether.⁸⁶

In recommending relaxing rather than boisterous games to allow the child to rest from the efforts of study, al-Ghazālī reflects his teaching of the value of 'repose for the mind' in adult life.⁸⁷ According to al-Ghazālī, games fulfil a role as early as the weaning stage in that they divert the child's attention from his mother's breast.⁸⁸ Moreover, al-Ghazālī wishes to make use of the tendency to play, so characteristic of children, to motivate them to activities on a higher plane, whose significance will be understood only later in life. In this way it is possible to attract the child to studies, first through games – although if not supervised but played at the whim of the child these may constitute a delaying factor in learning and education⁸⁹ – and then gradually through the use of other 'temptations' depending on the stage of development: fine clothes, honour, a position of leadership, and finally, the reward of the world to come.⁹⁰

From the references in similes involving children it is evident that for al-Ghazālī – as for his predecessors who related these instances – games symbolised the limited perception of the child.⁹¹ For example, the inability of believers to imagine the pleasure that exists in the knowledge of God and their longing for the physical pleasures vouchsafed them in Paradise are likened to the inability of children to sense the pleasure of governing and to their absorption in games, which alone cause them satisfaction.⁹² And again, the limited capacity of believers to comprehend their dependence on God and to accept the non-existence of their own independence is likened to the erroneous belief of children watching a puppet theatre that the figures they see are acting of their own accord.⁹³

It is interesting to learn about some popular toys and children's games in al-Ghazālī's time from references in his writings: toy animals, games with a ball (*kurra*), with a wand (*sawlaḡān*) and birds.⁹⁴ There is a particularly enthralling description of the puppet theatre, which (also?) served as children's entertainment, the rag-doll puppets being attached to slender cords and operated by a puppeteer hidden behind a screen.⁹⁵

It should be mentioned here that the general position of Islamic law towards children's games is positive. Although children's games are considered, in *ḥisba* literature, in the context of the *muḥtasib*'s duty to prevent the imbibing of wine and the display of forbidden objects, in fact only children's games of chance, such as dice and eggs, were frowned upon. All other games were considered acceptable. Al-Qurashī, in his *Aḥkām al-ḥisba*, permits trading in toys, explaining their usefulness in preparing maidservants to take care of children, apparently by playing with dolls. He also mentions the existence of a toy market in Baghdad at the time of the Caliph al-Muqtadir (908–32) and the licence the *muḥtasib* granted for that market to take place. The grounds for that permission was the *ḥadīth* report whereby the Prophet did not prevent his young wife 'Ā'isha from playing with dolls in his presence.⁹⁶

The scattered references to childhood and children in al-Ghazālī's writings, and particularly the chapter on child education in *Kitāb riyaḍat al-naḥs*, reveal an Islamic educational concept based on a synthesis between the orthodox and the Ṣūfī attitudes furthermore enriched by elements of the Greek philosophical heritage.

The very *raison d'être* of becoming a parent is formulated in religious – mainly other worldly – terms alongside the purposes of children's education, its contents and methods. To be sure, in *Kitāb riyaḍat al-naḥs* in general and specially in his discussion of child education, al-Ghazālī relies heavily on ethical and psychological theories of Greek origin which he learnt through translations and elaborations of earlier Muslim philosophers. Seemingly, he adopted Ibn Miskawayh's chapter on child education in its entirety. But in fact, by changing key terms, adding references to the Islamic religious sources and making some essential modifications in content, al-Ghazālī conferred on the Greek philosophical ideas a new meaning, integrating them into an Islamic moral-educational system.

5 Corporal Punishment in Medieval Islamic Educational Thought

Throughout history corporal punishment has constituted an important element in the method of moral education of children and in teaching at formal educational institutions; it is therefore reasonable to assume that 'a very large percentage of the children born prior to the eighteenth century were what would today be termed "battered children"'.¹ There is historical evidence for the frequent use of various sorts of instruments for beating by parents and teachers, including special appliances for flogging children at school, such as the flapper, which had a pear-shaped end and a round hole to raise blisters.²

The consequences of the use of these devices were sometimes serious: 'The beatings described in the sources were generally severe, involved bruising and bloodying of the body, began early, and were a regular part of the child's life.'³

The fact that physical punishment constituted an integral part of the educational process aroused very little criticism even by western humanists. Nevertheless, some gradual improvement in the condition of the child was discernible and certain forms of cruel physical punishment known since antiquity disappeared in later periods.⁴

Competition as well as fear of punishment were the two psychological motives for study among children in the Hellenistic world. The characteristic figure carved into the memory of pupils was the awe-inspiring teacher, rod in hand.⁵

Although not explicitly, Marrou connects corporal punishment in Hellenistic education to the perception of childhood and the status of the child in society. According to him, disregard for the special psychology, the needs and the wishes of the child prepared the way for imposition and violence:

The ancients, who were not interested in the child as such, being concerned only with the ultimate aims of education,

took little interest in this first stage [of education, that is, at home, up to the age of seven]. . . . Attention was focused entirely on the needs of the adults, and any problems concerning children . . . were more or less ignored.⁶

Goitein observes a similar connection between corporal punishment and concepts of childhood in medieval Oriental society:

In contrast to the modern view of the value of childhood, the rights of the child and his natural independence, in Oriental society of the Middle Ages childhood was not considered an age with a value and with rights of its own. This age was a state of imperfection, of ignorance and of bad traits that were inbred in man from birth. . . . [Jewish] education in Yemen was characterized by the view that the evil inclination inherent in the child had to be eradicated by force.⁷

Philippe Ariès, on the other hand, indicates another possible pattern of relationships between the perceptions of childhood and bodily chastisement. In his view it was precisely the growing interest in the child and the sharpening of the distinction between the adult and child in Europe of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries that led to stricter discipline in education and hence to greater infliction of corporal punishment:

The whole of childhood, that of all classes of society, was subjected to the degrading discipline imposed on the villeins. The concept of the separate nature of childhood, of its difference from the world of adults, began with the elementary concept of its weakness, which brought it down to the level of the lowest social strata. The insistence on humiliating childhood, to mark it out and improve it, diminished in the course of the eighteenth century. . . .⁸

Moreover, analysis of the connection between concepts of childhood and corporal punishment in the medieval Islamic context shows that exacting discipline and bodily punishment could coexist with positive intellectual and emotional expressions concerning children and childhood. The more progressive attitudes were reflected in the recognition of the unique nature of childhood and its significance as a distinct period in a person's life, in the interest in child development and the

medical, ethical and pedagogical aspects of his upbringing, and in profound psychological links with children. As we have shown, medieval Arabic literature is not short of such expressions which, while not necessarily mirroring reality directly, certainly do not entirely contradict it.

Islamic essays of the Middle Ages evince several attitudes towards corporal punishment: approval, albeit with certain qualifications, proposals for alternatives to physical punishment and its integration into a more sophisticated method of dealing with children's behaviour, and criticism of excessive corporal punishment based on psychological insight. The examples presented below give the impression that these attitudes developed in chronological order, and it is certainly possible that the disadvantages of corporal punishment were gradually recognised. A further question is how far this recognition was reflected in reality. As with other aspects of attitudes to children it seems that here too there was always a gap between theory and practice. Anthropological research, for example, indicates that corporal punishment is still an important element in parent – child relations in various Muslim societies.⁹

Evidence exists in medieval Arab–Islamic sources of the use of corporal punishment – sometimes to excess – and of grave consequences.¹⁰ This is the background against which the authors of legal and pedagogical literature imposed restraints on corporal punishment even when they did not reject this method of punishment in principle.

From *hisba* literature it emerges that one of the tasks of the *muḥtasib*, the inspector of the market, was the supervision of the teachers of the *kuttāb*; he was instructed to ensure the judicious use of bodily chastisement by educators: to prevent children from being flogged with heavy thongs that might fracture their bones or with slender lashes that cause immense pain, to order the use of a whip made of a broad leather band and the restriction of the parts of the body that might be struck so as to prevent serious physical injury.¹¹

Al-Qābisī proposes in his *al-Risāla al-mufaṣṣila* – a treatise on the rules of conduct of schoolmasters¹² – a controlled method of applying force to children: consultation with the father, who was exclusively responsible for his son's education from the age of seven, before inflicting corporal punishment, determining the number of lashes according to the child's endurance, and

deciding on the parts of the body that might not be struck, such as the head and face. He stresses that corporal punishment was intended to further the education of the lax pupil, not to provide the teacher with an outlet for his rage, and therefore it was to be applied judiciously. For this reason al-Qābisī prohibits the meting-out of punishment by one of the older students who acted as the teacher's assistant.¹³ The emphasis on these constraints attests that violence was applied inordinately by parents and teachers. How excessive it was, becomes evident from al-Qābisī's treatment of cases of children suffering grievous bodily harm or even dying at the hands of the teacher.¹⁴

A more general conception of the inducement and punishment of pupils is found in the writings of al-Ghazālī. Admittedly, expressions of approval of the traditional method of bodily chastisement may be found in these writings,¹⁵ combined with a recommendation for its reasonable and balanced use in such a way as to spur the student on and not to suppress him: 'It is better for the beast that the whip not be absent [when taming it and driving it], and so also for the child.¹⁶ Yet this does not prove that excessive beating is praiseworthy. This is also the case with [causing] fear [as an educational means]: it can be divided into [three grades, namely] little, excessive and balanced. The most commendable is balance and the middle way (between the two extremes)'.¹⁷

Al-Ghazālī's words on gentleness and compassion towards children, including his examples of the kindly attitude of the Prophet,¹⁸ were perhaps also intended to restrain manifestations of extreme violence; primarily, however, they are an expression of the paternal instinct, which al-Ghazālī sees as one of the divine graces and which, according to his perception of it, does not necessarily run counter to the accepted modes of punishment ('Spare the rod and spoil the child').¹⁹ However, in the chapter on child education in *Kitāb riyaḍat al-nafs*, al-Ghazālī proposes a somewhat complex response by the father to his son's behaviour, based on deeper observation of the psychology of the child. As in Bryson and Ibn Miskawayh, whose writings were the main source for this chapter, al-Ghazālī does not reject the use of force²⁰ but expands on alternative educational means such as arousing the child's fear of his father,²¹ warnings and rebukes.²² Ibn Miskawayh is in fact responsible for elaborating Bryson's fairly simplistic formula on this issue,²³ and al-

Ghazālī presents his views as they stand, with merely some changes of style.²⁴ A public response (in addition to the other forms of reward) is desirable to reinforce good qualities but is wrong in the case of misconduct. An offence committed once only should be completely overlooked, especially if the child himself tries to hide it (meaning that he understands why it is wrong), for exposing the act may in fact blunt the child's sensitivity to public censure.

In the case of perpetual bad behaviour the child should be scolded in private and warned that his conduct will be made public; but there should not be too many scoldings as this would reduce their effectiveness.²⁵ Al-Ghazālī suggests the same principle to the teacher in higher education, among whose tasks is to improve the conduct of his student, be he youth or adult: the hint of a kindly and merciful approach is likely to bring about positive results while belittling him in public may ultimately dull the pupil's fear of his teacher and exacerbate his impudence.²⁶

Ibn Khaldūn in his *Muqaddima* is also critical of undue bodily punishment, not only in regard of its immediate effectiveness – the yardstick applied by al-Ghazālī and his Hellenistic and Muslim predecessors – but out of an understanding of the long-term damage caused by this method. The pressure and the threat make children passive – in his words they become dispirited and lethargic – and induce cheating, lying and dishonesty in their relations with their elders in order to avoid punishment: 'Their outward behaviour differs from what they are thinking, because they are afraid that they will have to suffer tyrannical treatment (if they tell the truth).'²⁷

In the long term, the traits engendered by corporal punishment become ingrained in the children and then incorporated in their adult character:

They lose the quality that goes with social and political organization and makes people human, namely, (the desire to) protect and defend themselves and their homes, and they become dependent on others. Indeed, their souls become too indolent to (attempt to) acquire the virtues and good character qualities. Thus they fall short of their potentialities and do not reach the limit of their humanity. As a result, they revert to the stage of the lowest of the low.²⁸

In a manner reminiscent of the methods of modern psychohistorians and anthropologists, Ibn Khaldūn associates the qualities of the adults in any given society with the methods of education of the children in that society.²⁹ The statements are illustrated by an interesting analogy with nations that owing to prolonged submission and repression acquire specific characteristics such as trickery and insincerity.³⁰

Despite the unique nature of his 'psychological analysis' it is of interest that Ibn Khaldūn's operative educational conclusions are not remote from what we find in many other Islamic sources, and he too draws on the Islamic educational tradition. That is, Ibn Khaldūn does not entirely reject the value of corporal punishment in the educational process but appeals for its rational use – as a last resort, and then in moderation. His cogent remarks on the harm caused by the inordinate use of corporal punishment were likely to lend force to this appeal.

Part III:
Child Mortality and
Adult Reactions

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6 Infants, Children and Death in Medieval Muslim Society

Death among infants and children and the adults' reactions to this phenomenon are essential aspects of the history of childhood in any given society. Indeed these issues have been repeatedly raised and dealt with by historians of family and childhood, particularly with regard to the classical world and Europe from the Middle Ages to modern times.

The rates of infant and child mortality and their causes shed light on environmental, social and cultural conditions under which children in the past lived. Moreover, adults' reactions to their death reflect various types of concepts of childhood and attitudes towards children.

It is well-known that in pre-modern societies, particularly among new-born infants, infants of less than two years, and children of the lower strata, the death rates were very high. This was also the case with medieval Middle Eastern societies as well as with the European ones with which our findings are occasionally compared.¹ It was not until the end of the nineteenth century, with the attainment of the knowledge necessary for effective treatment of children's diseases, that essential changes began to take place.²

Some reasons for infant and child death in the Middle Ages lay in natural causes and were linked to the cultural-technological level of the time.³ Unbroken periods of childbearing, complications during pregnancy and childbirth, and the birth of twins all seem to have been common causes of infant (as well as maternal) mortality.⁴ Many children in the Middle Ages fell victim to starvation, malnutrition and disease. Breast-feeding was the only safe way to feed infants, but the fact that it was necessary to hand children over to wet-nurses in certain circumstances gave rise to frequent complications which could end with the child's death.⁵ Moreover, some of those phases in child development regarded today, in the industrial countries,

as relatively trivial were often a source of real danger in the past. For instance, according to al-Baladī, the Egyptian doctor of the tenth century, complications connected with teething, such as fever followed by shivering, were among the causes of infants' death.⁶ And the Scottish physician, Bernard of Gordon, in his *Regimen Sanitatis* (compiled in 1309), observed that many infants died of the illness that Hippocrates listed as accompanying the cutting of the first teeth.⁷ Weaning, too, was a dangerous stage in the child's life.⁸

The great killers of children in developing areas today were naturally much more widespread in the past. These are – apart from malnutrition – diarrhoeal diseases, the six vaccine-preventable diseases (namely, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, polio, and tuberculosis), acute respiratory infections, and malaria.⁹ Last but not least, outbreaks of plague in the Middle East and Europe alike, particularly from the fourteenth century onwards, resulted in high rates of mortality. It is reasonable to assume that infants and children were among the first victims of plagues and in higher than average proportions.¹⁰

Accidents resulting from living conditions at the time are also to be included in this category of factors. Information on typical accidents in which children were involved can contribute to a better understanding of some aspects of children's lives and of the adults' attitudes towards them. For example, Hanawalt argues that 'the motor development (of children) and, to a certain extent, their psychological development, is reflected in the sorts of accidents that they encountered' as depicted in coroners' rolls from late medieval England.¹¹ Thus

The most common accident for both male and female infants was to be burnt in the cradle. . . . By the third year of the child's life cradle deaths were no longer common and the children appeared to have entered into the second phase of development, (that of) reception to outside stimulus. . . .¹² The second stage of childhood in Hunt's Eriksonian model¹³ and the second readily definable accident grouping is from two to three, when children obviously have considerable motor skills and a lively interest in their environment. . . .¹⁴ Children got into accidents which show an increased interest in the work of their parents. . . .¹⁵ The number of accidents dropped dramatically, for both

boys and girls, after they reached the age of four: only 11 per cent of children involved in misadventure died in the period of four to seven. . . .¹⁶

According to Shahar, 'the number of accidents in which children were involved recorded in the *Lives (of Saints)* is a very large one'. But in contrast with Hanawalt, she argues that 'within these (accidents) the number of those in which children from the age of two to three years upwards were involved is larger by far than that in which infants in the cradles were involved'.¹⁷

A second category of factors of infant and child death includes various acts of negligence, violence, abandonment, and infanticide: there are indications that children were given insufficient food, that strong opiates, some of them fatal, were used regularly to quieten children, that physical force was widely used in child education, and that children were frequently victims of violence and abuse.¹⁸ There can be no doubt that the result of such practices was, in many cases, the death of the child.

Abandonment of children was practised in various civilisations in pre-modern times.¹⁹ It was one of the primary means for regulating family size and was used as a device for disposing of illegitimate children, offspring of incestuous unions, stepchildren and the like. *Expositio* was not necessarily intended to cause death; in fact, in some cases, parents hoped their child would be found and adopted to enjoy a better life. Nevertheless, it is likely that many of the exposed children, particularly the unhealthy and deformed ones whom few wished to adopt, died as a result of their exposure.²⁰

Sending infants to wet-nurses also involved a very high risk for the infants' life.²¹ Many infants were the victims of neglect on the part of their wet-nurses whose motivation was generally financial. And the wet-nurses' own children were in fact abandoned and exposed to mortal peril by the very act of being prematurely weaned. In such a situation, particularly if the wet-nurses had lost their own infants, they may have felt a certain hostility towards the strange children they nursed.²²

Moreover, there are testimonies to the effect that infanticide was practised in classical antiquity and medieval Europe as a device for post-partum birth control, particularly on sickly and deformed children, on illegitimate infants, and on females.²³

Scholars are divided in regard to the interpretation of the historical data mentioned above. Ariès and other historians of childhood put forward the thesis that high rates of infant and child mortality resulted in parents' indifference towards their own offspring, that 'people could not allow themselves to become too attached to something that was regarded as a probable loss'.²⁴ This indifference, in turn, caused negligence and therefore even higher rates of infant and child death.²⁵

With an almost monotonous regularity the same idea appears again and again in the discussion of the history of childhood: that there was no concept of childhood in the past . . . that there was no appreciation of the needs of children and thus they were neglected – some authors would say systematically ill-treated – by both parents and the state.²⁶

However, Ariès's thesis has met severe criticism in recent years from historians who have pointed out the complexity of the conditions of children's life in the past, on the one hand, and of adults' attitudes towards them, on the other.²⁷ Stephen Wilson, for instance, examining the methodology of family historians, comes to the conclusion that they

have selected and misinterpreted their evidence in the light of their preconceptions. . . . In contrast . . . to work on family structure and family law, work on emotional relationships within the family has been built, with some exceptions, on very shaky foundations, and this is nowhere more the case than where relations between parents and children are concerned.²⁸

Wilson analyses parent-child relationships within the economic, social, and environmental spheres and concludes that one is not allowed 'to posit *a priori* that mothers would be indifferent or lacking in affection towards their infant offspring. . . . There is, moreover, much evidence from non-European pre-industrial societies and from "backward" areas of Europe today that maternal and general affection for young children was the rule'.²⁹ He maintains that those behavioural patterns regarded by the Ariès school as a reflection of parental indifference should be interpreted in a totally different way. For example:

Banditer (in *The Myth of Motherhood: An Historical View of the Maternal Instinct*) relates that parents in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Anjou rarely attended the funerals of their children, presenting this as another sign of indifference; but it could equally be seen as an indication of intense grief, and a proper interpretation of such a custom would need to take account of the fact that rites of passage generally were traditionally regulated by the community and that the participation of parents and close relatives might be conventionally proscribed or limited.³⁰

Wilson also suggests that neither the occasional omission of infants' deaths from official records nor the form of infant burial should necessarily be understood as a sign of indifference towards children, and that parents reacted with grief to their children's death although their emotions were sometimes restrained.³¹

Even practices such as abandonment and infanticide, whose very scope has been disputable, analysed in the light of the social conditions in a given historical period, particularly in the context of family planning problems, need not always be interpreted as reflecting indifference, cruelty or contempt towards children.³² Wilson thus argues that 'the phenomenon of child abandonment proper in Europe, that is, leaving infants in the street, outside houses, or at convents and hospitals, is to be explained very largely by circumstances of extreme poverty or dishonour and, like that of infanticide and abortion, is no guide to normal relations between mothers and babies'.³³

Moreover, he claims that 'traditional European societies, urban and rural, set the highest value on fertility, and infanticide and abortion were only resorted to, it seems, in very special circumstances of poverty and/or dishonour'.³⁴ Demaitre too has doubts about the allegedly widespread practice of infanticide, especially of crippled and invalid children.³⁵

INFANT AND CHILD MORTALITY IN MEDIEVAL MUSLIM SOCIETY

Rates and causes

Needless to say, statistical information on the medieval period

does not exist. The late medieval Arabic chroniclers of the Black Death, for example, 'have given us vivid descriptions of social behaviour. On the other hand, they furnish us with no estimates of total population and only imprecise and exaggerated mortality figures . . .'.³⁶ However, taking into account general statistical data concerning developing countries today, particularly Islamic countries, it would be reasonable to infer, *a minori ad majus*, that rates of infant and child mortality in medieval Middle East were very high.³⁷

Referring to some descriptions of the conditions in the Arabian peninsula during the nineteenth and twentieth century, Manfred Ullmann concludes that the same conditions 'certainly existed in . . . pre-Islamic Arabia. The scarcity and poor quality of water, the constant undernourishment, and monotony of the diet, the battalions of flies and parasites were factors which, together with numerous endemic illnesses, were responsible for high infant mortality and low life-expectancy.'³⁸

As far as we can gather from scattered historical evidence, the situation was very similar in other areas in the Middle East (including urban ones) throughout the Middle Ages. And it seems that particularly in periods of plague the socio-economic differences did not play a crucial role in this respect; even families of higher strata often suffered the loss of many or all of their children. This can be gathered from written testimonies concerning, for example, Ibn Riḍwān, the prosperous doctor in eleventh-century Cairo,³⁹ the Baghdadian historian Ibn al-Jawzī (who lived in the twelfth century),⁴⁰ and al-Suyūṭī (who lived in Egypt in the fifteenth century). The last, himself an author of consolation treatises, as we have seen, mentions in his autobiography the death of most of his brothers and children.⁴¹

Lamentation poems were written by poets who, in some cases, had lost all their children. For example, Ibn al-Rūmī (the Baghdadian poet of the ninth century) who was bereaved of all three of his children, and Ibn Nubāta (lived in Syria and Egypt in the fourteenth century) who lost all or most of his sixteen children.⁴²

Between 1347 and 1517, outbreaks of epidemic plague – the consequence of the mid-fourteenth century plague pandemic (the Black Death) – occurred in the Middle East very frequently; in Egypt, for example, on average every eight to nine years.⁴³ It is likely that children – generally more vulnerable –

were among the first victims of plague, and that the incidence of their mortality was higher than that of adults.⁴⁴ Moreover, in contrast with infant mortality in normal times the death of children in times of plague was sudden and sometimes resulted in the disappearance within a very short time of all the children in the family.

This harsh aspect of life is clearly reflected in the consolation treatises for bereaved parents. The north Syrian al-Manbijī, for example, describes in his introduction to *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib* the horrendous toll taken by the plague of 775/1373, in which the majority of the victims were children, and cites the case of friends who lost all their children at once:

The motive for compiling this book is that in Rajab 775 (1373) a plague broke out. The incidence of plague increased towards the end of Shawwāl and during Dhū al-Qa'da and Dhū al-Ḥijja and decreased in Muḥarram in the following year. Thousands of people died and many houses were emptied. A large number of the dead were decent and pious believers. Thus, as so many excellent believers died, I designated the plague 'the plague of the virtuous' (*tā'ūn al-akhyār*). However, the majority of the dead were the children (*walākin kāna al-kathra fī al-atfāl*) and (the situation was so severe) that a family of our friends lost all its children, not one survived.⁴⁵

Some decades later in Damascus, against a similar background, Abū Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Qaysī wrote his *Bard al-akbād*. Unlike al-Manbijī he mentions nothing about the circumstances surrounding the compilation of the treatise except that it was written on the death of a friend's son. As in other consolation treatises, al-Qaysī's text consists mainly of *ḥadīth* reports and anecdotes taken from early Islamic sources.⁴⁶ However, some of these reports seem to reflect, albeit indirectly, the actual situation in the author's lifetime. An example follows: 'A man was asked: "How many children do you have?" Replying: "Nine" he was challenged: "But we know (of) only one?!" To this the man replied: "I had ten children, nine of them died and only one survived. Now I wonder whether I am his or he is mine".⁴⁷

Instances presented by Ibn Abī Ḥajala (who lived in Egypt and Syria in the fourteenth century) in his *Sulwat al-ḥazīn* – another compilation written to console parents on their child's

death – are also not based on concrete historical data, yet they implicitly reflect the situation in the author's lifetime. We are told, for instance, that 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir (born 626), the governor of Baṣra in the time of the Caliph 'Uthmān, was bereaved of seven sons in one day yet did not lose his faith in God.⁴⁸ Moreover, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abi Bakra al-Thaqaḥī (d. 715) lost forty sons (children ?) in the Torrent Plague whereas Anaṣ b. Mālīk (who died sometime between 709 and 711) lost at least eighty-three children.⁴⁹

In an anecdote, whose heroes are figures from the Hellenistic world – thus symbolically, not directly, reflecting historical reality in the medieval Middle East, it is narrated that Alexander the Great, while dying, asked his mother to invite all the town's women for a meal after his death, on condition that bereaved mothers would not be allowed to touch the food. In this way Alexander wished to prove that there was not one woman in the town who had not lost at least one of her offspring, thus consoling his mother on his own death.⁵⁰

Anecdotes such as these, although far from being a reliable source for historical details, are reflections of real situations and are useful for identifying types of individual or social reactions to such situations. However, some elements in the reports and narrations mentioned above are supported by chroniclers and, according to the figures furnished by some of them regarding rates of mortality during the time of the Black Death and its later recurrences, children were sometimes the majority of the victims.⁵¹

Taking into account the direct and indirect testimonies to child mortality, one can see more clearly why the abundance of descendants (in fact, male descendants) was regarded as a sign of celestial blessing, as expressed, for example in Qur'ān 34:35 and its commentaries. We can assume that not only the woman's fertility but also the survival of her children were looked upon as a divine gift.

Accidents involving children

Our information on accidents in which children in medieval Islamic countries were involved is derived from a variety of sources, but lacks any quantitative dimension. We therefore cannot go so far as to classify accidents according to age-groups

or sex, or to establish their frequency.⁵² However, our sources do enable us to identify several types of accidents, some of which appear more prevalent than others.⁵³

Among the accidents which were the direct result of environmental, social and cultural conditions of the time one should mention first those connected with childbirth and the treatment of new-born infants. There is no doubt that many deaths of infants (as well as of their mothers) were caused by poor hygienic conditions. Ibn al-Ḥājj al-'Abdarī, the Egyptian (Mālikī) jurist of the thirteenth – fourteenth century, severely criticises midwives who ignore the elementary rules of hygiene by handling babies with hands covered with blood and other kinds of filth, by wrapping them in unclean cloths, and even by licking them in an effort to clean their bodies.⁵⁴ He moreover condemns midwives for refusing to cooperate with other colleagues to the extent of exposing mothers and new-born infants alike to danger.⁵⁵ Also, from *al-Fatāwā al-kubrā* of Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī it emerges that the death of infants was sometimes caused by careless treatment during childbirth.⁵⁶

Another sort of accident, which seems to have been common, is connected with the practice of putting babies to sleep in their mothers' or nurses' beds. A case of overlaying – an infant being suffocated by his wet-nurse in the bed – is described by the Shī'ite jurisconsult Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī of the tenth century.⁵⁷ From pediatric writings it emerges that cots and cradles were not unknown in the Islamic world at that time.⁵⁸ However, it may well be that they were used solely in households of the upper urban strata.

Circumcision, carried out in Muslim society on every male and occasionally on females – sometimes very young ones⁵⁹ – could constitute a real danger in the Middle Ages, especially when one takes into account the poor medical facilities. Qāḍi Khān – the Tranoxanian Ḥanafī jurisconsult of the twelfth century – mentions in his *fatāwā* collection a case of a child who died presumably as a result of bleeding after the *hashafa*, a part of the head of the penis beyond the usual area of circumcision, was cut by the circumciser.⁶⁰

It seems that children, particularly in rural areas, were frequently exposed to dangers stemming from the natural environment. Cases are reported of children being devoured by a wild beast,⁶¹ their falling from the back of an animal,⁶² or

their being kicked to death by one. Ibn Abī Ḥajala quotes a description of a boy being attacked and killed by animals after falling from the roof of a stable. According to another version, the boy was kicked by a mule while entering the stable in the night to answer a call of nature.⁶³ Other types of misfortune, apparently common, were falling from a roof,⁶⁴ and drowning.⁶⁵

There were cases in which typical accidents were also attributable to adults' negligence.⁶⁶ One of Qāḍī Khān's *responsa* deals with an infant left by his mother in the care of the father. The latter, who had failed to hire a wet-nurse, was found responsible for starving the child to death. According to Qāḍī Khān, the mother should have been held responsible if she had known the baby could not consume another woman's milk.⁶⁷

Ibn al-Jawzī describes two brothers playing without any adult supervision. The little one, trying to imitate the way their father slaughtered a lamb, killed the elder.⁶⁸

Violence, abandonment and infanticide

Sometimes, as in cases of physical punishment, the adult's responsibility for the child's injury or death is even clearer. As we have seen, in medieval Muslim society, as in other ancient and medieval civilisations, corporal punishment was applied to children as a common means of moral education. It was generally regarded as a legitimate and indispensable instrument. Often, however, teachers and parents applied this form of punishment excessively. The Caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, for example, is praised by al-Ghazālī for punishing his own relatives as harshly as he did other believers. It is said – and not critically – that his own son was killed as a result of such punishment, and Qāḍī Khān discusses, in a juridical context, some cases of children beaten cruelly by their fathers.⁶⁹

There were, however, cases of children suffering from adult violence motivated not by educational principles. A case of one child locked up till he died, and another put into a beast's lair and devoured are discussed by Abū Jaʿfar b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (d.1067) and by al-Nawawī respectively.⁷⁰ Children were sometimes kidnapped, for one reason or another, and this could endanger their lives.⁷¹

That the practice of abandonment, referred to above in the context of the classical world and medieval Europe, was known

in the Muslim society of the Middle Ages can be inferred from the juridical literature. *Al-Muwatta'* by Mālik b. Anas (d. 795), probably the earliest surviving Islamic law book, includes 'A Judgement on the abandoned child' (*al-Qaḍā' fī al-manbūdh*):

A man from Banū Sulaym (named Sunayn Abū Jamīla) found an abandoned child (*manbūdh*) in the time of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Sunayn took him to 'Umar who asked: 'What has induced you to take this person?' Sunayn answered: 'I found him lost so I took him'. . . Yaḥyā said that he heard Mālik saying: 'What is done in our community about an abandoned child is that he is free and his *walā*⁷² belongs to the Muslims, they inherit from him and pay his blood money.'⁷³

The question of claiming abandoned children is dealt with at length by al-Shāfi'i (d. 820), the founder of the school of law named after him, in *Kitāb al-Umm*. In a 'Chapter on the claim for a child' (*Bāb da'wā al-walad*) a situation is discussed in which each of two people claims a child found abandoned as his own.⁷⁴

Although nothing is said in the above-mentioned sources about the death of abandoned children, one can assume that this was the result of exposure in many cases. It is apparently against this background that al-Nawawī emphasises that adopting a foundling was tantamount to saving his life.⁷⁵

Infanticide was practised in pre-Islamic Arabia as it was in other civilisations from pre-historic times onwards. This fact emerges from several Qur'ānic verses which prohibited the practice unequivocally; at the same time they supply some details on the motives of those who used to commit it. Although infanticide was regarded by Islam as a grave sin, it probably did not totally disappear as a result of the Qur'ānic legislation. Later sources, such as Qur'ān commentaries, *ḥadīth* reports, law collections and *responsa*, reflect the existence of the practice in Muslim society throughout the Middle Ages.⁷⁶

REACTIONS TO INFANT AND CHILD DEATH

Two levels of reactions to the death of infants and children in medieval Muslim society are referred to here: religious – theoretical and emotional. While juridical and theological dis-

cussions of the death of children reflect the 'ulamā's awareness of the uniqueness of children as well as the religious problems connected with their death, there are genres which mirror the emotional confrontation with the phenomenon. They are mainly consolation treatises for bereaved parents and poems of lamentation. Studying these sources while keeping in mind the above-mentioned descriptions of violence, abandonment and infanticide (which, on the face of it, support Ariès's 'thesis of indifference') one comes to the conclusion that the adults' attitudes towards infants and children in medieval Muslim society were much more varied and complex than those attributed by Ariès and his followers to adults in medieval Europe.

Juridical and theological discussions of infant and child mortality

Infant and child mortality as a frequent occurrence in medieval Muslim society is clearly reflected in juridical as well as theological writings dealing with the ways in which deceased infants and children should be treated, and their fate in the Hereafter. The focus of legalistic considerations is whether or not the child is to be regarded as a human being in the full sense of the word. The answer given by some well-known jurisconsults is in the affirmative. Thus, al-Sarakhsī, the Ḥanafī jurisconsult of the eleventh century, maintains that the coffin of a dead child should be borne by people, not on the back of an animal 'since by lifting (the coffin) on to a beast's back we liken it to the carrying of a burden. However, carrying (the coffin) by hand is the way to honour the dead. Children should be regarded as human beings and should be honoured like adults'.⁷⁷ Also, in al-Sarakhsī's view, the washing of an infant's corpse and the prayer for him should be exactly the same as the washing and the prayer for a deceased adult.⁷⁸ According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, this opinion is supported by a vast majority of *ḥadīth* reports describing the Prophet's prayer for Ibrāhīm, his son who died in infancy.⁷⁹

Al-Manbijī devotes a special chapter to this topic,⁸⁰ and his own view is already expressed in its title: '(Muslims) should pray for every Muslim infant (who has died) and for his parents'. This

right is, as he puts it, 'great tidings for bereaved parents', who, naturally, wish to secure the future of their children in the Hereafter by means of prayer. According to al-Manbijī, the majority of the religious scholars uphold this right although others reject it, claiming that only a child who has become mature is entitled to a prayer after his death. This opposing opinion is backed up by another *ḥadīth* report which describes Muḥammad as not praying for his son Ibrāhīm.⁸¹

Among the references cited by al-Manbijī to support what he regards as the general opinion, there are some interesting reports. One of them (taken from an authoritative *ḥadīth* collection, namely, al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*) urges one to pray for the soul of every infant who was born Muslim, including the child of a prostitute.⁸² Another (included in several *ḥadīth* collections) permits a prayer for an aborted foetus.⁸³

It should be mentioned, however, that those scholars who, in principle, allow prayer for a dead infant or aborted foetus are not unanimous as to certain preconditions. For instance, disputes arise concerning a prayer for the soul of an infant who was born dead.⁸⁴ Those who do not regard a foetus as a human being would also reject the prayer for such an infant, including him in the same category as the foetus. Most of the supporters of the prayer for an aborted foetus insist on one condition, namely, that the foetus had been in his mother's womb for at least four months. This reflects the view adopted by all jurists that the foetus is 'ensouled' after 120 days of pregnancy⁸⁵ and, as such, is expected to be resurrected on the Day of Judgement.⁸⁶ Interestingly enough, some scholars, who seem however to be in a minority, argue that every aborted foetus is entitled to be prayed for regardless of the point at which the abortion took place.⁸⁷

In any case, it seems that prayers for children's souls were actually offered up. We have at least two clear testimonies to support this. The first is included in Ibn Taghūr Birdī's account of burial during the plague epidemic of 833/1429–30 in Cairo: 'The child of an individual in our service named Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī died, and we went out with him to the oratory. The boy was less than seven years old, and when we set him down to pray over him among the dead, a large number of others were brought, until their numbers went beyond counting. Then prayer was over them all.'⁸⁸

Al-Yūnīnī (d. in Damascus, 1326) describes a similar case of a deceased child being treated like an adult and lamented. He mentions, moreover, that the memory of the child was kept in the hearts of the members of his family who missed him.⁸⁹

On the other hand, it seems that deceased children, as opposed to adults, did not have the privilege of having gravestones on their tombs,⁹⁰ and there are a few hints to the effect that dead infants and aborted foetus were sometimes buried in domestic yards.⁹¹ But, as claimed by Wilson, in the context of European history, this does not necessarily imply parental indifference towards the death of their offspring.⁹²

It could be argued that very little can be inferred from purely juridical discussions about attitudes towards living children. Nevertheless, it seems likely that some of the opinions expressed by religious scholars concerning infant mortality are connected with attitudes towards children in general. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the recurring exhortations to honour the deceased child and to regard him as an adult resulted from a situation in which living as well as dead children were not always looked upon as human beings in the full sense of the term. On the other hand, these exhortations reflect the awareness of religious scholars to the necessity of change.

Children's fate in the afterlife is mostly discussed in the context of rather abstract theological considerations of divine justice, mercy and knowledge.⁹³ Qur'ān commentators, theologians, and heresiographers deal with issues such as whether or not children are questioned in the grave, whether children of unbelievers are sent by God to Hell, whether God punishes children in the Hereafter, and the exact status of Muslim children in Paradise. However, discussions of this sort were not always irrelevant to actual life and in some cases they mirror, albeit implicitly, certain concepts of childhood and attitudes towards children.

In the first place, the abstract theological discussions look more relevant when they appear in treatises written to console parents distressed by the loss of a child or children, finding it hard to accept. Here the theological discussions play an important psychological role in supporting the bereaved parents by assuring them that their children's place in Paradise is secured.⁹⁴ Thus, the chapter entitled 'On placating parents concerning (the fate of) the children' in al-Manbijī's *Tasliya* opens

by quoting a Qur'ānic verse (52:21) in which Allāh promises the believers 'to join their seed with them (in Paradise)'. Al-Manbijī ignores the complexity of the theological problems raised by the verse and the various suggestions made by Qur'ān commentators on this issue.⁹⁵ His main concern is rather the practical psychological value of the verse in consoling parents. From this point of view the most important message of the verse is that 'the progeny will reach the ranks of their fathers in the Garden, even though they have not by their own works achieved those ranks . . .'.⁹⁶

The idea that the child is an innocent creature – since he had not committed sins before his death – and a potential believer is supported by commentaries to other Qur'ānic verses,⁹⁷ and by various interpretations of the term *fiṭra* (lit. 'natural disposition') which are dealt with in a special section within the above-mentioned chapter.⁹⁸ Al-Manbijī accepts the notion that *fiṭra* means 'monotheism and Islam'. Since all children – including those of unbelievers – are born in a state of *fiṭra*, they are entitled to enter the Garden when they die in childhood, although they cannot yet be credited with good works.⁹⁹ In another chapter al-Manbijī consoles parents who lost an infant by assuring them that the baby's suckling period will be completed in Paradise. He cites an unidentified narration to the effect that on a certain tree in Paradise a breast is hung from which the infants are suckled.¹⁰⁰

As mentioned above, some concepts of childhood are reflected even in writings in which questions connected with infant mortality are discussed in a purely theological context. Thus, the basic assumption of the Muslim religious scholars in considering the issue of the questioning of children in the grave¹⁰¹ is that children are lacking *tamyīz* (lit. 'the ability to discriminate between good and bad, right and false', etc.). That means, in this context, that they do not have the intellectual ability to comprehend the basic principles of faith.¹⁰²

Those believing in the questioning of children, while accepting the above-mentioned assumption, try to explain away the contradiction by arguing that Allāh 'completes' the children's intellect in the grave and reveals to them the right answers by means of inspiration.¹⁰³ The opponents of the idea of children being questioned in the grave emphasise the child's innocence and non-accountability: 'And Allāh does

not punish anyone who has not committed a sin. The meaning of the punishment of the grave is apparently the pain caused to the dead by the (behaviour of) others, not (necessarily) a punishment for any of his own acts.¹⁰⁴

This theological debate had practical implications as well. One's position in it could determine whether the basic articles of faith should be passed on to a dying child (*talqīn*)¹⁰⁵ and whether special supplications should be offered to save him from suffering in the grave.¹⁰⁶ It is likely that the recommendation to teach every Muslim child the articles of faith even before he could understand their real meaning¹⁰⁷ was the result of the awareness of the rather poor survival prospects of children.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya sees an essential difference between the situation of the deceased child in the grave, on the one hand, and in the Hereafter, on the other. Regarded as non-accountable, due to his intellectual inability, the child is exempted from being questioned in the grave. In the next world, however, his intellectual development being accomplished, he is expected to accept the angel's instructions and to obey God; otherwise, he will not escape the divine punishment.¹⁰⁸ The idea that children's intellect becomes complete in the next world was concomitant with the concept of children, when entering Paradise, changing physically and becoming adults.¹⁰⁹

Not many theologians of earlier periods, however, endorsed distinctions such as this and, to them, the fate of children in the other world remained a controversial issue. Some Muslim groups, especially Mu'tazilites and Shi'ites, crediting children with innocence and a state of religious 'neutrality' and emphasising God's justice, held that children are admitted to Paradise regardless of their parents' fate. That meant that even the infant children of unbelievers were entitled to enter the Garden. Yahyā b. Al-Ḥusayn al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq (859-910), the founder of the Zaydī dynasty in Yemen,¹¹⁰ is an outstanding representative of this attitude. The discussion of the question of children's fate in the Hereafter in his *Majmū'* concludes as follows:

From these and from similar verses it is known that God will not torture infant children on the day of Resurrection. He will not punish them for their parents' sins nor for the sins He knows they themselves could have committed (if they had

lived). This is the case with the infant children of believers as well as of unbelievers, and also with adulterers' infants and madmen who became mad in their childhood and remained so till their death.¹¹¹

The concept of children's innocence and 'neutrality' was so deeply rooted that even some of the extreme opponents of the Mu'tazila,¹¹² among them certain subgroups of the Khawārij,¹¹³ were not unanimous concerning the fate of children in the world to come. While one group (al-Azāriqa) believed that the legal status of the infant children of polytheists was the same as that of their parents, and they would be punished in the Fire,¹¹⁴ many members of another group (the Ibāḍiyya) were described as

hesitating concerning the suffering of the children of polytheists in the world to come. They considered it permissible to assume that God would make them suffer in the other world, but not in the way of retribution (for having been unbelievers). Others considered it permissible to assume that, as an act of kindness, God admitted children into Paradise. Still others held that God made them suffer by necessity and not by choice.¹¹⁵

Similarly, the Sunnis are not categorical as to the fate of infant children of the polytheists. The Prophet is credited with the statement that only God knows how these children would have acted had they lived. Therefore Muḥammad himself refused to rule whether they are admitted to Paradise or sent to Hell. In the eleventh century, al-Ghazālī was still perplexed by these questions. He suggests that unbelievers' children, just like madmen, enjoy an intermediate status in the Hereafter: on the one hand, they are not punished; on the other, they are precluded from eternal happiness. Nevertheless, he avoids any clearcut decision and refers to the contradictory reports concerning their fate.¹¹⁶ Ibn Taymiyya, citing the above-mentioned Prophetic statement in one of his *fatāwā*, supports it with the well-known *ḥadīth* report according to which every infant is born in a state of *fiṭra*; he thus expresses his own position, namely, that children are innocent and non-accountable, and cannot be held responsible for their parents' actions.¹¹⁷

Emotional reactions to the death of infants and children

The severity of the problem of infant and child death in medieval Muslim society, particularly in the late Middle Ages, when so many children fell victim to the Black Death, together with the possibly growing awareness of the parents' difficulty in coping with that problem, seem to have been the main causes of the flourishing of the genre of consolation treatises for bereaved parents in Egypt and Syria between the end of the thirteenth and the sixteenth century.¹¹⁸ The uniqueness of these treatises lies in their very existence as separate compilations dedicated exclusively to the religious and psychological problems connected with infant and child death.

As mentioned above, almost nothing was new in the content of the consolation treatises. They were composed of *ḥadīth* reports, narrations and anecdotes derived from earlier sources and generally lacking any concrete details concerning, for example, the causes of and reactions to children's death. This gives the treatises a somewhat impersonal character. Moreover, it may well be that the *ḥadīth* reports and the various narrations do not always reflect concrete events even from the times in which they appeared, namely, the first centuries of Islam. Nevertheless, they seem to represent types of adult response to infant and child mortality which existed in no small measure in medieval Muslim society. The earlier materials were therefore still relevant in the late Middle Ages. Formulas such as '*lā ya'īshu lahu (or lahā) walad*' ['none of his – or her – offspring survives'] or '*wa-anā raqūb la ya'īshu lī walad*' ['I am a woman of whom no offspring lives'] occur in *ḥadīth* reports and are cited by authors of consolation treatises to describe a tragic situation with which they and many people of their generations were familiar.¹¹⁹ That is also apparently the case with a large number of reports including the prophetic promise that bereaved parents would be rewarded by entering Paradise – where they would meet their deceased children once again – or by being protected from the fires of Hell. Interestingly enough, the most common version of this *ḥadīth* report refers to parents who were bereaved of not fewer than three children:

The Prophet – may Allāh bless him and grant him peace – said: 'Every Muslim who is bereaved of three of his children

- those who have not committed any sin (that is, very young)
- will be admitted by God to Paradise as an act of mercy on His part.¹²⁰

Moreover, according to another *ḥadīth* report, the Prophet hesitated whether parents who lost ‘only’ one of their children – apparently a very common occurrence – were entitled to such a reward or not; eventually he compromised and made the concession.¹²¹

The most interesting themes of the consolation treatises as well as a few lamentation poems written for or by bereaved fathers are the tension between the emotional–spontaneous type of reaction, on the one hand, and religious–‘rational’ one, on the other, and the efforts to harmonise them.¹²² Among several types of parent – child relationship, these writings bring to light strong psychological links resulting in moving emotional reactions in cases of death. However, in contrast with this type of reaction – reflected in many *ḥadīth* reports and anecdotes cited in the consolation treatises – other reports which apparently represented the authors’ view and supply the *raison d’être* of their compilations, call for restraint and control and even point out the religious ‘advantages’ of children’s death. The latter motif appears also in lamentation poems. It thus seems clear that in a situation of total indifference to children’s death the consolation treatises and the lamentation poems would not have had to be written at all. Their main task was not to deal with the theological problems involved in the death of innocent creatures but rather to cope with outbursts of emotions and with the psychological difficulties experienced by bereaved parents. As al-Manbijī puts it: ‘The death of a child, which occurs to most of the people in our time, causes the parents anxiety and lack of forbearance and patience, all as a result of the too small number of religious exhortations.’¹²³

Strong emotional reactions to the death of a person close to one were condemned from the religious point of view in general, not only in cases of children’s death, since they implied a sceptical attitude towards the divine promise of eternal life in the Hereafter and a preference for earthly values.¹²⁴ In religious terms, the death of a child is one of the most difficult ordeals the Muslim is expected to endure in order to prove his belief and submission to the divine decree. This notion is mentioned

by all the authors of the consolation treatises that we have checked.¹²⁵ Al-Qaysī, moreover, emphasises the suffering involved in this ordeal from the psychological and even physical points of view by describing it as a flame burning in the heart and the liver.¹²⁶ No wonder, then, that the traumatic reaction of bereaved parents ended in some rare cases with their own death.¹²⁷ The common spontaneous reaction, however, was less destructive, but still very sentimental. Many reports depict parents and other people bursting into tears and weeping as a reaction to the death of a child. In some cases it is clear that the deceased child was very young. The emotional behaviour of the Prophet Muḥammad at the funeral of his son Ibrāhīm, who died in his infancy, served as an example to validate such a reaction when control and restraint were in fact expected. The report reflects the two contradictory types of reaction – the emotional, on the one hand, and the religious – ‘rational’ on the other, and subsequently their harmonisation. The first type: ‘And the Prophet went in front of Ibrāhīm’s coffin, then he sat on his grave. Then Ibrāhīm was brought down to his grave and the Prophet, seeing him laid in the grave, shed tears (*dama’at aynāhu*). When Muḥammad’s companions saw him doing so they also started to weep and even to cry loudly (*bakau ḥattā irtafa’at aṣwātuhum*).’¹²⁸

The opposite reaction, that of restraint and control, is represented here by Abū Bakr who asks the Prophet: ‘Are you crying after having forbidden crying (at funerals)?!’ The Prophet, in his reply, suggests a form of compromise based on a distinction between the emotional domain, symbolised by the eyes and the heart, being controlled, in a way, by the conscious domain symbolised by speech: ‘*Yā Abā Bakr, tadma’u al-ayn wa-yawja’u al-qalb fa-lā naqūlu mā yushkitu Allāh* [‘O Abū Bakr, the eyes shed tears and the heart hurts but we say nothing which irritates God’].¹²⁹ And in another version of this report: ‘*Inna al-ayn tadma’u wa-al-qalb yaḥzunu wa-lā naqūlu illā mā yurḍī rabbanā wa-innā bi-firāqika, yā Ibrāhīm, la-maḥzūnūna*’ [‘the eyes shed tears and the heart is grieved but we say only what satisfies God (although) we grieve your departure, O Ibrāhīm’].¹³⁰ In yet another *ḥadīth* report relating the death of Ibrāhīm the human emotions are projected on to the natural surroundings; the sun is said to have been eclipsed on the very day on which the infant died.¹³¹

The pattern of the report described above occurs in other *ahādith*, although sometimes the order in which the opposite types of reaction are introduced is reversed. In a *ḥadīth* report cited by al-Qaysi¹³² it is told that one of the Prophet's daughters sent for him as her son was dying. The immediate response of Muḥammad was refusal. The only message he had for the grieving mother was one of forbearance and endurance (what we call the religious-'rational' type of reaction). But the daughter, who might have been expecting a miracle, kept begging the Prophet to come. The Prophet's eventual encounter with his dying grandson brought about a dramatic change in his behaviour. Shaking, he took the boy in his arms and cried. Here too the harmonisation between the two types of response is presented by the explanation Muḥammad gives for his reaction. The shaking, he says, has been caused by Allāh and is to be interpreted as a sign of God's mercy on those believers who are themselves merciful. Thus, Muḥammad's response, although it could have been seen as too emotional from the religious point of view, was approved as religiously legitimate.

It is told that Rajā' b. Ḥaywa used the example of the Prophet to justify the emotional reaction of the Caliph Sulaymān on the death of his son Ayyūb in spite of the contradictory advice of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz to remember God and to be patient. According to the narration, Sulaymān understood very well the psychological significance of crying. Without it, he says, his liver would have been torn.¹³³

In addition to weeping, some other forms of emotional reaction are mentioned in the sources. A father is described as becoming distraught every time he saw the toys of his deceased son.¹³⁴ Another one refrains from eating and drinking as a result of his son's death.¹³⁵ And yet another father spends long nights without sleep, thinking of his dead son.¹³⁶ And indeed, Ishāq b. 'Imrān, a Muslim doctor of the ninth-tenth century observed that 'the loss of a beloved child . . . can release such sadness and dejection that melancholy is the result'.¹³⁷

It can be argued that emotional responses to child mortality are not necessarily an indication of warm relationships between parents and living children, that, as DeMause puts it, 'expressions of tenderness toward children occur most often when the child is non-demanding, especially when the child is either asleep or dead'.¹³⁸ This might be true but, as far as our sources

are concerned, not the whole truth. Many reports in the consolation treatises reflect parental love and tenderness towards living children and some understanding of their needs. In a narration, cited by al-Qaysī, there is a description of a father whose little son used to join him while he was sitting in the company of the Prophet and his companions. The vivid description implies an intimate relationship between father and son: '*Wa-fīhim rajul lahu ibn ya'tihi min khalaf zahrihi fa-yaq'udu bayna yadayhi*' ['there was a man among them whose little son used to approach him from behind and then sit in front of him'] as if they were playing together. No wonder, then, that the father could no longer attend these meetings after the child's death, fearing painful memories which would cause him sadness.¹³⁹ In another narration related by al-Manbijī, one of Muḥammad's companions who had been absent from their meetings is said to have been nursing his ailing son who eventually died.¹⁴⁰

Close physical relations between parents and infants expressed by kissing (*taqbīl*), smelling (*shamm*), caressing (*mu'ānaqa*), and putting the infant on the parents' breast (*iḥtiḍān*) and the like are referred to in many reports. Some of them are included in special sections within the *ḥadīth* compilations entitled '*Mā jā'a fī ḥubb al-walad*' ['Prophetic traditions on loving children'],¹⁴¹ '*Bāb rahmat al-walad wa-taqbīlihi wa-mu'ānaqatihi*' ['A chapter on having pity on children, kissing and caressing them']¹⁴² and the like. Children used to be called by pet-names such as '*Qurrat 'aynī*' ['he is my consolation'] and '*thamarat fu'ādī*' ['the fruit of my heart'].¹⁴³ Also children, especially when grown-up, are portrayed as arousing their parents' expectations, making their parents proud and other people envious. Children were expected to be energetic, brave and intelligent.¹⁴⁴

Testimonies from anthropological researches carried out in contemporary Middle Eastern Muslim communities, with their traditional extended families, support the assumption that warm relationships between parents, particularly mothers, and children were not rare in medieval Muslim society although the opposite is also mentioned.¹⁴⁵ These relations find their expression, *inter alia*, in the parents' shock and bereavement in cases of infant and child death regardless of the frequency of events such as these.¹⁴⁶ To this, modern literary testimonies, such as Taha Ḥusain's *al-Ayyām*, should be added. In some ex-

tremely impressive passages the strong emotional reactions of the author's parents to the death of their little daughter and their son (no longer a child but rather a young man) are depicted.¹⁴⁷

Certainly, the sources also reflect a socially pragmatic attitude towards children and the advocacy by religious teachers of marriage as primarily a means of procreation. A *ḥadīth* report appearing in many versions and cited in the consolation treatises mirrors a well-known socio-biological type of reaction to the loss of a child, namely, bearing another child as compensation for the deceased one,¹⁴⁸ but this does not necessarily contradict warm relationships with living children and feelings of bereavement when they die.

Al-Manbijī admits that the death of a grown-up child is a greater loss to his parents than that of an infant since, being endowed with intelligence and good character, he is much more helpful. But as Le Roy Ladurie observes with regard to Montaigne, although 'love for children was not . . . entirely disinterested' and 'a male child meant a strong right arm (to the peasants) . . . he also meant much more . . .'.¹⁴⁹ This seems to be the case with at least some Muslims as well. And indeed, al-Manbijī himself, in accord with other authors of consolation treatises, devotes much space in his work to reports intended to console not only parents who had lost young children and new-born infants but also those whose baby was still-born.¹⁵⁰

The term 'children' in the *ḥadīth* reports and early anecdotes means almost exclusively males; and on the parental side, mothers are relatively rarely mentioned. Indeed, from birth females were discriminated against in medieval Middle Eastern society. As we have seen, efforts were made by Muslim scholars to denounce the rejection of new-born females which sometimes found expression in a father's wishes to see his daughter dead: '*Kunta tatamannā mawtahā*'.¹⁵¹ On the other hand, there are no grounds for the common assumption that infanticide, especially as a family-planning device, was practised only on female infants in pre-Islamic Arabia and, as mentioned above, there are some indications to the effect that, although forbidden by the Qur'ān, this practice did not disappear altogether in later periods.¹⁵² The absence of female children from many reports in the consolation treatises was not therefore necessarily the result of lack of a spontaneous – emotional reaction to their death. However,

the sensitivity of adults to the death of female children might have developed in later periods as reflected, for example, in the title of al-Šāliḥī's treatises,¹⁵³ and in the third chapter of al-Sakhāwī's *Irṭiyāḥ al-akbād*, devoted, *inter alia*, to '*Mā qīla fī mawt al-walad wa-al-wālidayni wa-al-akh wa-al-zawja wa-al-ibna*' ['What was related concerning the death of a child, of parents, a brother, a wife and a daughter'].¹⁵⁴

The psychological need for consolation expressed in the sources is further evidence of the distress caused by children's death. Abū Hurayra is asked by Khālid b. 'Allān to supply a *ḥadīth* report to comfort him on the death of his two sons: '*Innahu qad māta lī ibnāni fa-mā anta muḥaddithī 'an Rasūl Allāh ṣal'am bi-ḥadīth yuṭayyibu anfusanā 'an mawtānā?*'¹⁵⁵ ['I lost two of my sons. What Prophetic reports can you narrate to comfort us?']. And a bereaved father thanks Ḥasan al-Baṣrī for alleviating his grief: '*Hawwanta 'alā wajī 'alā ibnī*'¹⁵⁶ ['You made my grief on (the death of) my son easier'].

Providing comfort for bereaved parents – '*Taṭyīb khāṭir al-wālidayni 'alā al-awlād*'¹⁵⁷ – was one function of the consolation treatises. The other was to restrain excessive emotional reaction which was, as mentioned above, not acceptable from the religious point of view, especially in cases of children's death. *Ṣabr* (steadfastness) and *iḥtisāb* (the readiness to grant children to Allāh) are the ways of response most exalted in the treatises for which a great reward is promised in the Hereafter. Many reports – some examples are cited above – promise bereaved parents the protection from the fire of Hell and the admission to Paradise as consolation for their children's death.¹⁵⁸ Even an aborted foetus serves as his parents' advocate in the world to come and helps them enter the garden.¹⁵⁹ These motifs are elaborated fully in the reports emphasising the 'advantages' of bereavement of children: '*Faḍl man māta lahu walad*'.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, some reports portray the sorrow of those whose offspring did not precede them into the Hereafter: '*Ḥasra man lam yuqaddim walad^{an} fī al-ākhirā*'.¹⁶¹ The next step was to describe parents as wishing for the death of their children in their quest for eternal reward and delighted when that wish was fulfilled.¹⁶²

On the one hand, there are descriptions of emotional reactions and, on the other, the religious ideal, namely, the readiness to entrust one's children to God and even delight at their

death. However, many reports suggest a compromise, that is to say, permission to express restrained emotional responses along with acceptance of and resignation to the divine decree.

7 *Ṣabr* (Steadfastness) of Bereaved Parents: A Motif in Medieval Islamic Consolation Treatises and its Origins

In some of the Islamic consolation treatises for bereaved parents, presented in the Introduction and dealt with in Chapter 6, various versions of a *ḥadīth* report are cited;¹ they describe Umm Sulaym, Abū Ṭalḥa's wife,² whose young son dies yet she deliberately does not break the news to her husband until she has conceived the following night. The Prophet endorses *ex post facto* her behaviour by blessing the night, and the obvious result is the birth of a new child and then of eight more children.

As we shall see, this narration is used by authors of consolation treatises as an example of the virtue of *ṣabr* – steadfastness, so praiseworthy from the religious point of view. Yet from our standpoint this *ḥadīth* report is significant also as a reflection of a socio-biological type of response to the death of an infant or a child, namely, giving birth again as a form of compensation for the lost child. This type of reaction is probably characteristic of communities in which the rates of infant and child mortality are high, as we can also learn from other ancient as well as medieval civilisations³.

In what follows we shall try (a) to reconstruct the whole narration on the basis of its various partial versions as they appear in *ḥadīth* sources, (b) to demonstrate the significance and role of this narration within the Islamic consolation treatises, (c) to draw attention to some similar motifs in Jewish religious literature, and to suggest an explanation, in general terms, concerning the relations of these motifs with those in the Islamic sources.

THE NARRATION ON ABŪ ṬALḤA AND UMM SULAYM IN ḤADĪTH LITERATURE

Within the *ḥadīth* literature the shortest version of the narration on Abū Ṭalḥa and Umm Sulaym is to be found in the collections of al-Bukhārī (al-Bukhārī I⁴) and Muslim⁵ known as *al-Ṣaḥīḥānī*. In both collections the relevant *ḥadīth* report is presented in the context of *taḥnīk*⁶. According to that report, *taḥnīk* was practised also on the son of Umm Sulaym and Abū Ṭalḥa who was born after his elder brother's death.

The English translation of the story is presented twice below: first, in the short version and second, in various versions included in *ḥadīth* collections, other than *al-ṣaḥīḥānī*, as well as in Ibn Sa'd's collection of biographies, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*⁷. These versions, which include additional religious elements, are compared with the shorter one (repeated in bold type):⁸

1) Narrated Anas b. Mālīk: A son of Abū Ṭalḥa was ailing (literally, was complaining of sickness, or of pain). While Abū Ṭalḥa was out, the boy died. When Abū Ṭalḥa returned home he asked: 'How does my son fare?' Umm Sulaym replied: 'He is quieter than he has ever been'. Umm Sulaym brought supper for him. He had supper and (then) obtained his desired enjoyment of his wife. When Abū Ṭalḥa had finished (Umm Sulaym) said (to him): 'Bury the boy!' In the morning Abū Ṭalḥa came to Allāh's Apostle and told him (what had happened during the night). Allāh's Apostle asked: 'Did you sleep with your wife last night?' Abū Ṭalḥa said: 'Yes'. The Prophet said: 'O Allāh! Bestow your blessing on them as regards that night of theirs!' Later Umm Sulaym gave birth to a boy. . . .

2) Narrated Anas b. Mālīk: A son of Abū Ṭalḥa [Ibn Sa'd I: surnamed Abū 'Umayr] **was ailing (literally, was complaining of sickness, or of pain). While Abū Ṭalḥa was out** [Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Sa'd II: in the mosque;⁹ Ibn Sa'd I: in one of his enclosed grazing grounds] **the boy died**. [al-Bukhārī II, Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Sa'd II: When Abū Ṭalḥa's wife saw that he had died she prepared the corpse; Ibn Sa'd I: washed, shrouded, embalmed, Ibn Sa'd I, III, V:¹⁰ covered it with a garment; al-Bukhārī II: put it aside, Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Sa'd I-III: and asked

the members of her family not to tell Abū Ṭalḥa about the death of his son; Ibn Sa'd I, III: unless she did.]

When Abū Ṭalḥa returned home [Ibn Sa'd II: from the mosque; Ibn Ḥanbal: with a group of people of the mosque], **he asked: 'How does my son fare?'**¹¹ **Umm Sulaym replied: 'He is quieter than he has ever been'** [al-Bukhārī II: 'His soul has taken rest, I hope he really found rest'; Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Sa'd II: ('He is) in the best condition he has ever been'; Ibn Sa'd I: 'He had his supper and finished it'; Ibn Sa'd V: 'He is sound'; al-Bukhārī II: And Abū Ṭalḥa believed she was right]. **Umm Sulaym** [Ibn Sa'd I: perfumed herself and painted her face for him (for Abū Ṭalḥa) and] **brought supper for him** [Ibn Ḥanbal: for them (the people of the mosque)].¹²

He [Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Sa'd II: they all (Abū Ṭalḥa and his friends)] **had supper**. [Ibn Ḥanbal: The people (of the mosque) left and Umm Sulaym slept with Abū Ṭalḥa (literally, she stood up for what a wife stands up); al-Bukhārī II: He was with his wife all night; Ibn Sa'd V: She presented a gift which she used to present to him] **and (Abū Ṭalḥa) obtained his desired enjoyment of his wife**. [Ibn Sa'd V: Then she asked him for what a wife usually asks her husband and he obtained his desired enjoyment (once more) of his wife; Ibn Sa'd III: She conceived a boy].

When Abū Ṭalḥa had finished [Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Sa'd II: At the end of the night; al-Bukhārī II: When it was daylight he washed himself and when he was about to leave] **(Umm Sulaym) said (to him): 'Bury the boy!'** [al-Bukhārī II: Informed him that he (the boy) had died; Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Sa'd I-III, V: She asked Abū Ṭalḥa: 'What do you think of a household (Ibn Sa'd V: of people of our neighbourhood) who lent another household a thing (Ibn Sa'd V: who held on to a loan, refusing to return it when asked by the owners); then the owners asked the borrowers to return it. Should they do that or keep the thing?' (Abū Ṭalḥa) replied: 'Nay, they should return it (to the owners)'; Ibn Sa'd II: 'They were not fair'; Ibn Sa'd V: 'What a bad deed!'; Ibn Ḥanbal: (Umm Sulaym) said: 'Your son was a loan borrowed from God, may He be blessed and exalted, and God has taken his soul';¹³ Ibn Sa'd V: 'It is you! Your son was a loan borrowed from God, and God took his soul back'; Ibn Sa'd I: 'O Abū 'Umayr! be ready to grant your son to God!'; Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Sa'd II, III:

Abū Ṭalḥa recited (the Qur'ānic formula): 'Lo! we are Allāh's and lo! unto Him we are returning',¹⁴ Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Sa'd II: and praised God; Ibn Sa'd V: said to Umm Sulaym: 'By God, you will not get the upper hand over me in steadfastness'. **In the Morning¹⁵ Abū Ṭalḥa came to Allāh's Apostle and** [al-Bukhārī II: prayed with him and afterwards **told him (what had happened during the night). Allāh's Apostle asked: 'Did you sleep with your wife last night?'** Abū Ṭalḥa said: **'Yes'. The Prophet said: 'O Allah! Bestow your blessing on them as regards that night of theirs!**¹⁶ **Later Umm Sulaym gave birth to a boy . . .** [Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Sa'd I, II: named Abdallāh b. Abī Ṭalḥa. al-Bukhārī II: Sufyān said: A man of the *anṣār* said: 'I have seen nine children (of Abū Ṭalḥa and Umm Sulaym) all of them reciting the Qur'ān'. Ibn Sa'd V: 'Abāya said: 'I have seen seven sons born (in the course of time) to the boy (namely, Abū Ṭalḥa's and Umm Sulaym's son) all of them finished the memorizing of the Qur'ān']'.

THE NARRATION ON ABŪ ṬALḤA AND UMM SULAYM IN LATE CONSOLATION TREATISES FOR BEREAVED PARENTS

As mentioned above, some authors of late medieval consolation treatises, relying on *ḥadīth* sources, present Umm Sulaym's behaviour as a shining example of the virtue of *ṣabr*. As al-Manbijī puts it:

This woman showed steadfastness, accepted (the death of her son), acted deliberately, and prepared for herself a reward (in the Hereafter) for her patience. Therefore God replaced her lost child with a better one. Everyone hurt by affliction who looks at a woman who, in time of misfortune, did what is generally done in time of delight and joy should find comfort and should get to know the attributes of the first generations (of Muslims). He also should know that men are fitter for deeds like that and for steadfastness than are women.¹⁷

In the process of adaptation and interweaving the *ḥadīth* reports into their compilations the authors of the consolation treatises changed some details or added others. Thus Ibn Abī

Ḥajala, praising Abū Ṭalḥa's *ṣabr* too, stresses his strong affection for his son. According to Ibn Abī Ḥajala, when the boy was dying, Umm Sulaym, worried about the possible grief to be caused to her husband, managed to remove him from the house by sending him to the Prophet. However, when the boy's death was eventually revealed to Abū Ṭalḥa, he reacted as a *ṣābir* no less than his wife, saying: 'I am more worthy of steadfastness than you.' He performed the ablutions and two prostrations in prayer before he went to the Prophet to tell him of the deeds of both himself and of his wife (not only her deeds) that night.¹⁸

In al-Manbijī's *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, the story of Umm Sulaym and Abū Ṭalḥa opens a chapter designed to comfort parents by describing the behaviour of the Prophet's companions and followers in time of misfortune. Al-Manbijī presents two versions of the story: one is based on al-Bukhārī II, the other is composed of elements taken mainly from Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Sa'd I and III. The only significant change we could locate in al-Manbijī's presentation, compared with the *ḥadīth* reports, concerns Abū Ṭalḥa's reaction to the news of his son's death. According to al-Manbijī, Abū Ṭalḥa reacted angrily to his wife's behaviour that night and complained of her to the Prophet. However, the latter is said to have laughed while hearing the complaint, thus approving Umm Sulaym's behaviour.¹⁹

Unlike Ibn Abī Ḥajala and al-Qaysī, al-Manbijī, as we have seen, concludes the story with his own summary in which religious lessons are drawn.

There are several similarities between the versions of the narration as they appear in *Bard al-akbād* and *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*. It therefore seems likely that al-Qaysī was familiar with al-Manbijī's treatise (and, as will be shown below, with Ibn Abī Ḥajala's treatise as well). Abū Ṭalḥa's angry reaction to the news, for instance, which is an element missing in the *ḥadīth* reports, is to be found in both compilations. At this point al-Qaysī puts into Abū Ṭalḥa's mouth the following rebuke: 'You (Umm Sulaym) left me (uninformed of my son's death) until I was defiled (by sexual intercourse), only then did you let me know.'²⁰ This is not to say that al-Qaysī did not know the original *ḥadīth* reports and that he did not derive some details directly from them but, on the whole, he seems to have preferred a later, elaborated version as his main source.

PARALLEL MOTIFS IN JEWISH SOURCES

Interestingly enough, in both *Sulwat al-ḥazīn* and *Bard al-akbād* another narration attributed to the Prophet is attached to the story of Abū Ṭalḥa and Umm Sulaym. In this, Muḥammad praises God for having in the Muslim community a steadfast woman (namely Umm Sulaym) comparable to a Jewish woman known for her steadfastness (‘*ṣābirat Banī Isrā’īl*’). Asked about her, the Prophet tells the following story:²¹

A Jewish woman was asked to prepare a meal for her husband’s guests. While he and his guests were enjoying the meal their two sons, who were playing near the house, fell into a well. The woman brought out the children dead, put their bodies in a room and covered them. However, so as not to grieve her husband and spoil the feast, she did not break the news to him. When the guests had gone and the husband asked about the boys she replied: ‘They are in the house’. [The woman perfumed herself and presented herself to her husband and he slept with her. Then he asked once again about the boys and his wife gave him the same answer].²²

When at last he called them, the two boys came out of the room and ran towards him. The woman said: ‘Glory be to God! They were both dead and God quickened them as a reward for my steadfastness’.

The story of the Jewish woman as presented in two of the Islamic consolation treatises from the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, should be regarded as one phase in a long development of a pattern of narrations. It is likely that this pattern evolved roughly at the same time in Jewish as well as Islamic sources and that each group of sources influenced the other while retaining some characteristic elements of its own.²³ The very idea of giving birth to a new child as a motif used to console bereaved parents and, in the same context, the loan allegory, appear in *Avōt de-Rabbī Nathan*, a commentary on treatise *Avot*, which might have been earlier than the *ḥadīth* literature, thus possibly constituting the origin of the report about Abū Ṭalḥa and Umm Sulaym. This report in its turn apparently served as a source of inspiration to the authors of *Midrash on Proverbs* compiled, probably in Palestine, in the ninth

to tenth centuries and to Rabbi Nissīm b. Jacob Ibn Shāhīn of Qayrawān (tenth century), the author of *al-Faraj ba'da al-shidda* ['Relief after Adversity']. Although the narrative of the steadfast woman of *Banū Isrā'īl*, as cited in *Sulwat al-ḥazīn* and *Bard al-akbād*, is not derived directly from Jewish sources it seems clear that it is based, at least partly, on a Jewish pattern of the story which was known in the Middle East. Be that as it may, al-Qaysī and Ibn Abī Ḥajala are unique in referring to both Muslim and Jewish versions of the narration.²⁴

8 Infanticide in Medieval Muslim Society

Infanticide is known to have been a common means of birth control from early, apparently even prehistoric times.¹ In societies that lacked any precise knowledge of the fertilisation process and consequently methods for its prevention, infanticide was used more frequently than other known methods of population limitation, such as abstention from intercourse and abortion.² Infanticide was expected to serve several functions:

General reduction in population numbers (including twin removal), removal of defectives, elimination of social 'illegitimates' (i.e., offspring whose existence violated social group boundaries), response to the loss of the nursing mother, control of dependency ratio, manipulation of sex ratio, and finally, use as a backstop to other methods when those fail.³

The readiness to practise infanticide does not necessarily contradict the assumption that women instinctively desire to rear and protect their young. 'The facts do support the view, however, that the maternal instinct, if indeed there be such an instinct for human beings, is not nearly strong enough to counteract unaided the tendency to destroy unwanted infants.'⁴

In ancient Greece and Rome, for instance, infanticide was legitimate until the fourth century AD.⁵ The efforts made from that time onwards, through state as well as church legislation and exhortation, to dissuade parents from killing their children demonstrate the changes within the political and religious establishment. On the other hand, 'the recurrence of legislation indicates how deeply ingrained were the practices of infanticide and child sale, and how futile it was merely to decree the abolition of these customs'⁶ not only in late Roman and early medieval times but also in the late Middle Ages.⁷

Even where the growing impact of Judeo-Christian ethics could in theory have improved the survival chance of infants, the injunction against killing was almost invariably interpreted

as 'thou shalt not kill thine own kind'; and one's own kind was variously and rather narrowly defined. Furthermore, the rich and powerful (mostly) men imposed the moral imperative against killing upon the poor (frequently) woman, who often had no way of living up to that imperative.⁸

As we can learn from the Qur'ān and other sources, infanticide was a recognised practice among the inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula before the rise of Islam; it was denounced and totally rejected by the Prophet Muḥammad.⁹ But was the Qur'ānic prohibition of infanticide – in line with the Judeo-Christian moral view – more effective than the late Roman and Church legislation? Was it successful in abolishing in one attempt an old practice that stemmed from powerful economic, demographic, social and religious circumstances? It seems reasonable to assume that a long period of time would have been necessary for the prohibition to become accepted, especially as far as nomads were concerned, and that, in any event, the prohibition could not have been absolutely effective. References in various Islamic sources from times after the first generation of Islam – albeit sporadic and in most cases indirect – could be interpreted as indications that the practice did not totally disappear from medieval Muslim society.

By analysing the relevant Qur'ānic verses as well as Qur'ān commentaries, *ḥadīth* reports and legal sources, we shall try not only to present the basic Islamic attitude towards infanticide but also to bring to light the circumstances in which this practice existed in medieval Middle Eastern society and its characteristics: who carried out infanticide, who were the victims, what were the motivations behind such a practice and what were the methods used?

INFANTICIDE IN THE QUR'ĀN

In the Qur'ān infanticide is mentioned in five Sūras (81, 17, 16, 6, 60), the first four of which are of the Meccan period.¹⁰ The context as well as the content of the verses dealing with the practice indicate that infanticide was prevalent in pre-Islamic Arabic society and that Muḥammad regarded it as a grave sin and its prohibition as one of Islam's principal regulations.

Verse 8 of Sūra 81 (*al-Takwīr*) is the only place in the Qurʾān where the root *wʿd* is used:

When the sun is overthrown,
And when the stars fall . . .

**And when the girl-child that was buried alive is asked
For what sin she was slain**

(*wa-idhā al-mawʿūdatu suʿilat bi-ayyi dhanbⁱⁿ qutilat*) . . .

[Then] every soul will know what it hath made ready. . . .¹¹

The verb *waʿada* generally means ‘to bury alive’;¹² it refers to a daughter, but it can also be used for male infants.¹³ However, in other verses (6:137, 140, 151; 17:31; 60:12), infanticide is designated *qatl al-awlād*, that is to say, killing male as well as female children. The motive for this, mentioned in two verses (17:31; 6:151) – namely, relief for both child and parents in times of privation – suggests that infanticide was practised on both sexes. It is likely, however, for the additional reasons mentioned in Qurʾān 16:57–9 (see below), that female infants were more frequently the victims.

Sūra 17 (*al-Isrāʾ*):31 says: ‘**Slay not your children, fearing a fall to poverty** (*wa-lā taqtulū awlādakum khashyata imlāqⁿ*). We shall provide for them and for you. Lo! the slaying of them is great sin’.¹⁴ Sūra 6 (*al-Anʿām*): 151 reads:

Say: Come, I will recite unto you that which your Lord hath made a sacred duty for you: that ye ascribe no thing as partner unto Him and that ye do good to parents, **and that ye slay not your children because of penury** (*wa-lā taqtulū awlādakum min imlāqⁿ*) – We provide for you and for them – and that ye draw not nigh to lewd things whether open or concealed and that ye slay not the life which Allāh hath made sacred, save in the course of justice. This He hath commanded you, in order that ye may discern.¹⁵

In both these instances infanticide is mentioned in the context of want and destitution. In the first case (17:31) it is described as being committed in advance, a means of **preventing** poverty (and as such might be regarded as a means of family planning) whereas in the second (6:151) it is presented as the **result** of destitution. The difference in the motives may explain the different order in which the two elements of the divine promise are introduced: to ‘provide for them [the children first!] and

[then] for you [the believers]' (17:31), and to 'provide for you [the believers first!] and [then] for them [the children]' (6:151).¹⁶

It was also suggested that these verses should be examined in the context of fertility rites prevalent in pre-Islamic Arabia. According to this suggestion, young people were considered most fitted to serve as sacrifices in these rites.

Preference, it seems, was often given to females, be they human or animal; it was hoped that the power of procreation inherent in the female would be imparted to the soil, thus enhancing its productivity. The usual procedure may have been to slaughter them in a sacrificial ritual so that their blood would saturate and fertilize the earth.¹⁷

In any case, in both verses mentioned above,¹⁸ as well as in 60:12 (see below), infanticide is listed among those grave sins which characterise the Jāhiliyya: polytheism (*shirk*), murder, adultery, and contempt toward one's parents. Infanticide seems, therefore, to have been one of the most severe problems faced by Muḥammad in his struggle against paganism.

Verse 12 in Sūra 60 (*al-Mumtaḥana*) is the only one to indicate unambiguously the fact that **women** used to kill their newborn infants:

O Prophet! If believing women come unto thee, taking oath of allegiance unto thee that they will ascribe nothing as partner unto Allāh, and will neither steal nor commit adultery **nor kill their children** (*wa-lā yaqtulna awlādahunna*), nor produce any lie that they have devised between their hands and feet, nor disobey thee in what is right, then accept their allegiance and ask Allāh to forgive them. Lo! Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.¹⁹

One of the motives for infanticide, mentioned by the Qur'ān (Sūra 16, *al-Naḥl*, vv. 57–9) concerns only female infants, namely, the father's intense disappointment and fear of disgrace which might be brought on him by the birth of a daughter:

And they assign unto Allāh daughters – Be He glorified! – and unto themselves what they desire [that is, sons]; when if one of them receiveth tidings of the birth of a female, his face remaineth darkened and he is wroth inwardly.

He hideth himself from the folk because of the evil of that whereof he hath had tidings [asking himself]: Shall he keep it in contempt, **or bury it beneath the dust** (*am yadussuhu fī al-turābi*). Verily, evil is their judgement.²⁰

The pagan Arabs' practice of sacrificing children to their gods is hinted at in Sūra 6, verse 137:

Thus have their [so-called] partners [of Allāh] made the killing of their children (*qatla awlādihim*) **to seem fair unto many of the idolaters**, that they may ruin them and make their faith obscure for them. Had Allāh willed [it otherwise], they had not done so. So leave them alone with their devices.²¹

From these verses we can conclude that the practice of infanticide was deeply rooted among the inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula in pre-Islamic times for ritual purposes, for social reasons – namely, a discriminatory attitude towards females – and, particularly, for economic – demographic reasons.²² It is hard to accept that it disappeared altogether during Muḥammad's lifetime. Some indications of its prevalence in Muslim society throughout the Middle Ages are included in *ḥadīth* literature, in Qur'ān exegesis, in *fiqh* collections and in *fatāwā*.

INFANTICIDE IN LATER SOURCES

It is difficult to identify the authentic historical data concerning infanticide in pre-Islamic Arabia in *ḥadīth* reports and Qur'ān commentaries. It is clear that discussions of the practice in such sources sometimes mirror the image of the Jāhiliyya in medieval Islam no less, possibly more, than they do historical reality. It is by no means implausible, however, that at least some of those *ḥadīth* reports dealing with the subject and the interpretations of the relevant Qur'ānic verses by medieval commentators reflect the very existence of infanticide at the time of their compilation. They apparently served as a means of rejecting the practice and denouncing it.

The recurrence of the prohibition of infanticide in *ḥadīth* literature and the praising of believers who save girls from death might be regarded as an indication that this practice was not unknown in the first centuries of Islam, when *ḥadīth* reports

were created and collected.²³ Another indication is the reference in some *aḥādīth* to the murdered infant (*wa'īd*) as one of those expected to stay in Paradise forever together with the Prophet and the Muslim martyrs (*shuhadā*).²⁴ In other *aḥādīth*, however, Hell is destined to be the abode of the buried infant.²⁵ These two types of reports could be considered as expressions of different positions in the debate on the fate of unbelievers who die in infancy. On the other hand, it may well be that the second type refers to polytheists' infants killed in pre-Islamic times, whereas the first one indicates Muslim victims of infanticide.

The fact that *Kitāb jarḥ al-'amd* (the chapter dealing with premeditated wounding in *Kitāb al-umm*) is opened by al-Shāfi'ī (d. 820) with a discussion of infanticide²⁶ could also be regarded as a reflection of a real problem in the second half of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century. The interpretation of this discussion in purely theoretical terms is less convincing.

The issue of infanticide is also raised in *fiqh* collections from later periods. Many of them discuss cases of murder committed by the victim's parents or grandparents.²⁷ Although this does not necessarily mean that the victims were always infants or children it is clear that sometimes they were very young.²⁸

In some writings, such as *al-Muḥallā* by Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1063), *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* by al-Ghazālī and *Zād al-ma'ād* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, infanticide is dealt with in the context of methods of birth control.²⁹ This might be taken as another indication of the reality of the problem in Muslim society throughout the Middle Ages. Moreover, several *fatāwā*, some of them from as late as the sixteenth century, deal with infanticide.³⁰

METHODS AND MOTIVES

As we have seen, in most Qur'ānic verses concerning infanticide the practice is referred to as *qatl al-awlād* (killing male as well as female children). In only two places (81:8 and 16:57–9) is female infanticide explicitly mentioned. Nevertheless, Qur'ān commentators generally tend to interpret *qatl al-awlād* as *qatl al-banāt* ('killing female children') or *wa'd al-banāt* ('burying female children alive').³¹

From the purely linguistic point of view it would be difficult to establish that mainly females were involved.³² However, it seems reasonable to assume that female infanticide was more common than male infanticide, not only in pre-Islamic Arabia but also much later,³³ and that the commentators interpreted the relevant Qur'ānic verses in the light of this reality. On the other hand, Qur'ān exegetes themselves sometimes leave the word *awlād* without any explanation, thereby allowing the reader to understand it as 'children' in general.³⁴ Moreover, the commentaries and other sources admit that males were sacrificed by parents to their gods in pre-Islamic Arabia,³⁵ and that in times of famine children of both sexes were killed as a means of birth control.³⁶ While the first motivation seems to have disappeared with the advent of Islam the second might have survived it. If, as mentioned by al-Ṭabarī, *wa'd* was committed in times of extreme poverty and was regarded as an act of mercy upon the infant,³⁷ it seems reasonable to conclude that females as well as males were among the victims. The fact that coitus interruptus, intended to prevent the birth of both male and female infants, is designated in *ḥadīth* literature as 'hidden *wa'd*' (*wa'd khafīyy*), would seem to support this assumption.³⁸

The tendency of the Qur'ān commentators to identify *qatl al-awlād* with *wa'd al-banāt* may be explained not only in terms of the verses which describe the discriminatory attitude in pre-Islamic Arabia toward new-born females, but also by the impact of those verses according to which sons were highly regarded in those times as a source of power and a sign of divine blessing.³⁹ Interpretation of *qatl al-awlād* as 'infanticide' in general could be regarded as contradicting these verses although in fact there was no contradiction between appreciating children, even loving them, and infanticide.

Qur'ān commentaries and *ḥadīth* reports refer to mothers and fathers alike as having committed infanticide and, as we have seen, in *fiqh* collections grandparents are also mentioned. One has the impression, however, that men were most often the agent and that, on many occasions, mothers practised infanticide against their will. This is understandable if we take into account the fact that the burdens of family and livelihood fell on the man and that he was responsible for 'family planning'.⁴⁰ In some sources, however, the mother is mentioned as the one initiating infanticide.⁴¹

In connection with verses 8,9 in Sūra 81, al-Ṭabarī cites a *ḥadīth* report which illustrates the responsibility of the father and the frequency of the practice. Qays b. ʿĀṣim al-Tamīmī is said to have told the Prophet: 'I buried alive (*wa'adtu*) eight [in other reports twelve, even thirteen] daughters in the time of the Jāhiliyya'.⁴² On the other hand Ṣaṣa'a is known to have saved the life of no fewer than seventy girls by buying them from their fathers.⁴³ From yet another report it emerges that *wa'd al-bint* was generally the mother's task but that she was obliged to do so by her husband under threat of divorce. The husband had the authority to decide whether a new-born female would be kept alive or not.⁴⁴

As noted earlier, it is told that Qays b. ʿĀṣim used to order the killing of every female offspring born to him. One of his daughters, however, is said to have been born when he was away from home, and the mother managed to save her by hiding her with her family. She told Qays that the baby had been stillborn. Only years later, when the girl was grown up, was the secret revealed to the astonished father.⁴⁵ Like other reports and anecdotes, this may be regarded as a legendary story structured according to a well-known pattern. But even as such it reflects an aspect of family life in Arab society.

Al-Zamakhsharī, in his commentary on the infanticide verses in Sūra 81, mentions two kinds of *wa'd al-banāt*. The first is the burial of the female infant alive immediately after birth. According to al-Zamakhsharī, a grave used to be prepared, even before the delivery, beside the woman's resting place. If the new-born child was a female she was immediately thrown by her mother into the grave. A male was allowed to live.⁴⁶ The second type of *wa'd*, 'which seems to be rather a kind of human sacrifice' but might have had other motivations as well, was the burial of a girl by her father when she was much older, at the age of six or even more.⁴⁷

Another device to get rid of new-born infants (including males), which might have been in use in times as late as the sixteenth century, was the cutting of the umbilical cord without tying its end thus causing the death of the infant as a result of bleeding. This is hinted by a *fatwā* given by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī: '[Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī] was asked about women who attended a delivery of a male infant. One of them cut the infant's umbilical cord without tying its end although the rest of the women

prohibited her from doing so. Are all of them responsible for the killing or that woman only?'⁴⁸ Although the woman's motivation is not clear, and the whole story could be interpreted as reflecting negligence, one cannot rule out the possibility that here the *fatwā* is dealing with a case of infanticide.

In the spirit of the Qur'ān, the commentators emphasise economic pressure as the main motive for infanticide. As we have seen, infanticide was sometimes regarded even as an act of mercy upon the children (*shafaq^{an} bihim*) in times of want.⁴⁹ It seems likely that infanticide as a family-planning device did not disappear in the Middle East in periods after the Prophet's death. In many sources, coitus interruptus ('*azl*') as well as abortion (*ijhād*) are mentioned in the same breath as infanticide. Coitus interruptus and even abortion are known to have been common practices in medieval Muslim society. As mentioned above, the first of the two is frequently referred to, in *ḥadīth* literature, as *wa'd khafiyy* ('hidden infanticide').⁵⁰ However, according to some reports it was allowed by the Prophet,⁵¹ and this permission was supported by the majority of Muslim jurists throughout the Middle Ages.⁵² On the other hand, abortion, like infanticide, was regarded from the juridical point of view as a severe crime against a living creature, especially if it took place in the later stages of pregnancy; otherwise it was tolerated by some jurists.⁵³ Al-Ghazālī, in an illuminating discussion in *Kitāb ādāb al-nikāḥ* [*Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, II, 2] treats '*azl*', *ijhād* and *wa'd* as if they were the components of one system of contraceptive techniques. While permitting the first and forbidding the latter two, he distinguishes between several grades of severity regarding abortion, the gravest being the killing of a new-born infant:

All that [that is, abstaining from marriage altogether, abstaining from intimate relations after marriage, or avoiding emission after penetration] is not the same as abortion or the burying of girls alive. These two things, in effect, constitute a crime against an already existing person; and that also has stages. The first stage of existence is that the sperm should lodge in the uterus, merge with the fluid of the woman, and become thus receptive to life; interfering with this process constitutes a crime. If it develops into a clot and a little lump of flesh then the crime becomes more serious. If the spirit is

breathed into it and the created being takes form, then the crime [of abortion] becomes more serious still. The crime is most serious after the fetus is born alive.⁵⁴

Ibn al-Jawzī also compares abortion with infanticide as if they were practices of a similar nature,⁵⁵ and so do Ibn Kathīr and al-Ṭabarsī in their commentaries on Qurʾān 60: 12.⁵⁶ Thus it is likely that infanticide of new-born infants, although totally rejected by Islamic law, was practically the last resort when other means – coitus interruptus and abortion – had failed.

The medieval urban societies of Egypt and Syria viewed contraception, abortion, and infanticide together as agents of population reduction, more specifically, as agents of a smaller family size. Their religious law tolerated abortion and condemned infanticide not because of its motive, but because it entailed murder. To be sure, the jurists pointed out that infanticide had the same motive (escape from dependants) as contraception, and contraception was universally permitted.⁵⁷

So far we have come across only two examples in medieval Islamic sources of infanticide motivated by the illegitimacy of a child or by his sickness, a practice apparently widespread in the Greco-Roman world as well as in medieval Europe.⁵⁸ Interestingly enough, the chapter dedicated to premeditated abortion in Ibn al-Jawzī's *Kitāb aḥkām al-nisā'* includes a narration about the murder of illegitimate infants.⁵⁹ An adulterous woman is described as being devoured by serpents; this was divine punishment for murdering three infants born as a result of her sins. Here, again, although the story is of legendary nature it might be regarded as a symbolic reflection of a real situation.

In a *fatwā* given by Ibn Taymiyya a case of killing a sick child is considered:

A question about a woman who buried her son alive in the house until he died (*dafanat ibnahā bi-al-bayt hattā māta*). The woman as well as the child were ill and she was disgusted by him (*fa-innahā kānat marīḍa wa-huwa marīḍ fa-ḍajirat minhu*). What should be done with her?

Supporting his answer by Qurʾānic verses and a *ḥadīth* report, Ibn Taymiyya emphasizes the gravity of the woman's crime. He

says:

Since Allāh prohibited killing a child in time of want and fear of poverty, the more so would He forbid it when these circumstances do not exist.⁶⁰

As shown in Sūra 16 (vv. 57–9), the motivation for committing infanticide in pre-Islamic Arabia was sometimes connected exclusively with female children, that is, the shame of the father who 'is given the good tidings of a girl'. The commentators discuss in further detail the father's reactions reflected in these verses, and the reasons behind them. Thus al-Bayḍāwī describes a father's frustration and anger directed not only towards the new-born infant but also towards the mother (who was apparently held responsible for the infant's sex).⁶¹ According to al-Qurṭubī, fathers feared they would be forced to marry off their daughters to people they did not like, particularly people of a lower social status.⁶² Moreover, people feared that their daughters would be taken captive and their honour violated.⁶³ Ibn Kathīr regards infanticide as an expression of the hatred of females (*karāhiyat al-banāt*) on the part of men.⁶⁴

Females were discriminated against from birth not only in pre-Islamic times but also in medieval Muslim society. This fact is reflected, *inter alia*, in the efforts made by religious scholars to denounce the rejection of new-born females which sometimes found expression in a father's wishes to see his daughter dead.⁶⁵ It is likely that in these circumstances, in addition to those of economic pressure, sex-selective infanticide was not an unknown phenomenon and that in Muslim society, as in many others, females were sometimes the victim of 'the power of culture to define which will be the "superior" sex in terms of survival'.⁶⁶

In their commentary on verse 137 in Sūra 6 some exegetes refer to the pre-Islamic practice of sacrificing children, particularly males: 'Men in the time of the Jāhiliyya used to swear that if a certain number of boys were to be born to them they would slay one of them (*la-yanḥaranna aḥadahum*) (as a sacrifice to their gods).'⁶⁷ It may be that the readiness expressed by Muslim parents to witness their children's death, and thus be rewarded by God in the Hereafter, reflects a remnant of the psychological motivation which led parents of the pre-Islamic Arabian tribes (as well as of other pagan societies) to sacrifice

their children: the attempt to influence the supernatural forces by offering up their dearest and nearest.⁶⁸ Some of the statements made by Muslims on this matter are rather explicit, although their motivation is sublimated. It is told that Zubayr, the well-known companion of the Prophet, gave his children names of Muslim heroes who had sacrificed themselves for the sake of God (*shuhadā*). Asked for the reason, Zubayr replied: 'I hoped that my sons would be martyrs' (*fa-inni aṭma'u an yakūna baniyya shuhadā*).⁶⁹ The Qāḍī Muḥammad Khalaf Wakī' (d. 918 or 919) had intended to console Ibrāhīm al-Ḥasbī (d. 898) on the death of his eleven-year old son (who was known as a very talented boy). He was astonished by al-Ḥasbī's reaction: 'I was looking forward to the death of this son of mine (*kuntu ashtahī mawta ibnī hādihā*)'. The father was convinced that he would meet his son in Paradise and would be rewarded there for his premature death.⁷⁰ For the same reason, 'Abdallāh b. Shudhab is said to have asked God for the death of his young son, his only child.⁷¹ The Ṣūfī Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād (d. 803) 'was seen smiling only once in thirty years – when his son died. This event was for him a sign of divine grace: "When God loves His servant, He afflicts him, and when He loves him very much He takes hold of him and leaves for him neither family nor wealth".⁷²

Reports on parents reacting with patience, satisfaction, and even joy to the death of their sons are included in al-Madā' inī's *Kitāb al-ta'āzī* and served as a means of encouraging bereaved parents and guiding them in the light of Islamic ethics. In one report a woman praises God after having been told about the death of three of her sons as martyrs in the battlefield.⁷³ In another, a father is described as saying to his dead son: 'God's mercy upon you, my son. I was joyful when the good news about your birth was brought to me and I have lived a long life, happy with you. However, I have not had a more joyful time than this [when you are dead] (*wa-mā atat 'alayya sā'atun anā fihā asarru minī sā'atī hādhihi*).'⁷⁴

In yet another report 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz frankly tells his ailing son that he would prefer to see him dead before he himself died: 'I would prefer you to be on my scales [in the Day of Judgment] than me being on yours (*la-an takūna fī mizānī aḥabbu ilayya min an akūna fī mizānika*).'⁷⁵

ISLAMIC ATTITUDE TOWARD INFANTICIDE

Muslims, like Jews and Christians, totally rejected infanticide. It was regarded as a typical manifestation of the ignorance and zeal (*hamiyya*) of the pagan Arabs in the time of the Jāhiliyya, those Arabs who did not trust God and did not recognise His ability to grant them sustenance.⁷⁶ As we have seen, *qatl al-awlād* is introduced in the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* as one of the grave sins from the Islamic point of view, sometimes as the gravest except for polytheism.⁷⁷ It is told, for example, that one of the Prophet's companions was afraid that God would not forgive him for killing his daughter at the time of the Jāhiliyya in spite of the fact that he had been converted to Islam. A detailed account of the crime sheds light on some aspects of the practice dealt with above. Thus, the father is described as the person initiating and committing infanticide, reluctant to marry off his daughter, and the mother is depicted as the girl's defender. The killing takes place when the girl is about to come to maturity (although the original plan of the father was to kill her immediately after her birth). The description of the girl is touching; she holds her father asking for mercy, and he struggles against his evil nature. The Prophet's reaction to the story indicates the contrast between the Islamic and the pagan point of view. He bursts into tears saying, 'If I had to punish somebody for crimes committed during the period of the Jāhiliyya, I would have punished you'.⁷⁸

This contrast is also reflected in the reports defining the difference between Islam and Jāhiliyya in this respect, and in those praising people for saving the lives of girls in pre-Islamic times. Unlike the Arab polytheists, the Muslims were said to have been satisfied with what was granted to them by Allāh even with new-born girls, knowing that the decree of God was better than any human decision regarding life and death and realising that for the survival of humankind the existence of both sexes is indispensable.⁷⁹ It is claimed that Islam regarded females as equal to males, even better, whereas pagan Arabs used to 'raise dogs and at the same time bury girls alive'.⁸⁰ It was therefore not surprising that people who were courageous enough to save the lives of girls in pre-Islamic times by buying them from their fathers were highly commended.⁸¹ The prohibition against the

killing of the enemy's women and children in time of war, attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad,⁸² should also be mentioned here. Interestingly enough, Ibn Taymiyya discusses the question of how the enemy's children (as well as the women) should be treated by Muslims as part of his commentary to Sūra 81. By interpreting verse 8, 'When the buried infant shall be asked . . .', he emphasises the interdiction against the killing of any innocent people, such as children and madmen, who could not be held responsible for their deeds.

The prohibition is based on a threefold argument: a) like Muslim children, the enemy's children are to be regarded as innocent and not responsible, from the juridical point of view; b) like women in the enemy's homelands they are not a part of the fighting forces; c) there is a possibility that they will become Muslims.⁸³

In conclusion, there are some indications that infanticide – a practice which had been prevalent in pre-Islamic Arabia – did not disappear altogether in medieval Muslim society despite the Qur'anic prohibition. However, our sources, which throughout the Middle Ages provide mainly indirect hints regarding infanticide, cannot supply any reliable data concerning its frequency. Moreover, nothing is known about the differences between various areas of the Muslim world and various segments of the Muslim society from the points of view of the very existence of the practice or its prevalence.

On the face of it, infanticide reflects an unequivocally negative attitude towards children. There is no doubt that this practice sometimes stemmed from cruelty and indifference on the part of adults toward children. However, in the light of empathetic examination, the complexity of the motivation leading to infanticide is revealed.⁸⁴ Thus, sacrificing children to gods in polytheistic societies was not necessarily the result of feelings of contempt and disregard toward the child. On the contrary, the victims (generally males) were sometimes the most beloved and precious children; otherwise the sacrifice would not have been regarded as meaningful.⁸⁵ In the monotheistic context the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac ('Take your son, your only son, whom thou lovest . . . there offer him

in sacrifice' [Genesis 22:2]) became a symbol of submission to the divine order.

Infanticide in times of want, practised under heavy economic pressure (despite the high rates of natural infant mortality), was sometimes regarded as an act of mercy upon the new-born infant; even so, it was difficult for mothers to accept. Anthropological studies also show that the occurrence of infanticide does not necessarily imply the ill-treatment of the surviving children.⁸⁶

Moreover, people did not always see the difference between abortion, which was not totally denounced in Islamic civilisation, and an act of infanticide when committed immediately after the infant's birth.

As we have seen, the concepts of childhood and the attitudes towards children in medieval Muslim society, as reflected in various branches of Arabic literature, were by no means homogeneous and unequivocal. On the one hand, parental love and concern was not uncommon and moving reactions to the death of infants and children are described.⁸⁷ On the other hand, children were often the victims of severe physical punishment and abuse. The practice of infanticide, together with the complexity of its motivation and the emotions involved, fits well into this setting.

9 Conclusion

In the eyes of medieval Muslim society childhood was a fairly short period although, apparently, not as short as described by Ariès in referring to medieval Europe. According to him 'as soon as the child could live without the constant solicitude of his mother, his nanny or his cradle-rocker, he belonged to adult society'.¹ This happened around the age of seven, sometimes even earlier. It seems that in Middle Eastern urban society, however, the period of childhood was a little longer. In Islamic law, *hiḍāna* (or *ḥaḍāna*), 'the right to custody of the child . . . exercised as a rule by the mother or a female relative in the maternal line' ends, in the majority of the schools of law, at the age of seven for a boy, and at puberty (about the age of nine) for a girl. Nevertheless, 'in Māliki law it lasts until puberty for boys and until consummation of marriage for girls'. But even the Ḥanafis consider the boy of seven and the girl of nine too young to be consulted regarding their choice of guardian from that age on.² When physical maturity does not manifest itself, majority (*bulūgh*) is presumed at the age of fifteen years according to the Ḥanafis, Shāfi'is and Ḥanbalis, and eighteen years according to the Mālikis.³ This is not to say that children did not start work before reaching the age of puberty. But the popularity of the *kuttāb* as a framework of formal elementary education might have delayed their initiation into the labour force for some years. Ibn Sīda of the eleventh century, in his dictionary *Kitāb al-mukhaṣṣaṣ*, for example, defines 'lad' (*ḥazawwar*) as a boy who is strong enough to work. According to an opinion cited by him the term refers to young people from ten to fifteen years.⁴ Although the aims, content and methods of formal elementary education were generally determined without much consideration of the psychological needs, tendencies, and skills of children, the *kuttāb* still served as a special institution for child education and, as such, helped in prolonging the period of childhood for a while. It is the lack of institutions of this sort which is regarded by Ariès as one of the main reasons for the short childhood in medieval Europe.⁵

Modern times have witnessed not only great progress in fields connected with children, such as pediatrics and child psychology, but also the dissemination of knowledge accumulated by scientists in these areas among the general public, particularly in industrial countries. These developments have been accompanied, in the last two centuries by the consolidation of a concept of uniqueness of childhood and its immense importance and the emergence of the child as the centre of the family. Nevertheless, the very idea of childhood as a unique period in human life with its own characteristics and importance is not new; it is rooted in the Hellenistic heritage. By translating pediatric as well as pedagogical and ethical works of Hellenistic origin, absorbing and interweaving them into their own writings, sometimes religious writings, Muslims made them part of their own culture. Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya are remarkable examples of scholars who took part in this process.

Ibn Sida's dictionary shows that the Arabic language has some forty terms to describe infants and children and various phenomena connected with their development.⁶ This indicates that awareness of the uniqueness of children and some stages of their development might have their roots also in the indigenous Arabic culture.

The great number of references to children and childhood in Arabic-Islamic sources, particularly the fact that the subject was dealt with in special chapters and treatises, is in itself a reflection of the attention paid by Muslim thinkers to childhood. The contents of many writings touching on the subject reinforces the impression given by the number of the references. Concern for the welfare of the child, his rights and the treatment he deserves is mirrored in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* as well as ethical and legal literature.⁷ And the medical writings, some of them devoted to pediatrics and related topics are based on a relatively rich and varied knowledge regarding the physical development of children, the diagnosis and treatment of childhood diseases and child psychology.

We cannot say how many of the theories on childhood were actually put into practice. Certainly, this varied from time to time, from place to place and from one social group to another. In any case, there can be no doubt that a gap existed between theory as reflected in the sources mentioned above and practice,

on which the sources say very little.⁸ It is plausible, however, that those urban classes of the medieval Muslim society who had some knowledge concerning infants and children did not altogether ignore the special needs of the young.

But even when the needs of children as viewed by Muslims in the Middle Ages were taken into account, their actual treatment suffered from the paucity of knowledge due to a lack of experiment, research and facilities. This is a source of significant differences between the medieval Islamic and modern Western attitudes towards various stages in the psychological and the physical development of the child and the variance in methods of treatment in areas such as feeding, swaddling and child education.

Moreover, in medieval Muslim society, as in other cultures in the past, attitudes towards children are characterised by a variety of notions and ambivalence. Side by side with what we, from a modern-western point of view, would call 'positive' concepts of childhood and attitudes towards children, there are many indications of 'negative' ones. These are reflected, first of all, in the contrast (found in al-Ghazālī's writings, for instance) between the notion of the child's purity and innocence on the one hand and his image as an evil creature, full of desires, on the other. The latter was the source of the idea that children should proceed to the next stage of life as quickly as possible, and of the practice of corporal punishment as a means of correcting undesirable traits.

Another indication of the ambivalent attitude towards children is the preference for males – a characteristic of a patriarchal family structure. The majority of the 'positive' expressions concerning children in the Arabic-Islamic sources refer to males and there are explicit utterances mirroring discrimination against females. This is the background against which differences between the sexes regarding ways of treatment and education and even female infanticide are to be explained. It should be emphasised, however, that infanticide was committed not only on females and in any case, severe as this practice is from the monotheistic moral point of view, it was not necessarily motivated by feelings of hatred and contempt for the victim.

Adult reactions to child and infant mortality, as reflected in written sources, indicate once again the complexity of Islamic

concepts of childhood and the ambivalent attitudes towards children. The fact that the genre of consolation treatises for bereaved parents flourished in the late Middle Ages, when so many children fell victim to the Black Death, may be seen in itself as a sign of strong emotional relationships between parents and their offspring. The contents of the treatises support this assumption with two reservations. First, that attitudes towards deceased children do not necessarily reflect relationships with living children, and, secondly, that psychological relationships between parents and female children did not find much expression in these compilations.

But even in the consolation treatises, side by side with motifs of love and tenderness towards infants and children, one finds motifs of steadfastness in the face of their death and even readiness to sacrifice children for the sake of God. No doubt, the tension between parental instincts and emotions on the one hand and Islamic religious values and ideals on the other, is one of the main causes of the ambivalent attitude towards living as well as dead children. In spite of the defence often given by Islam to children, including females, great efforts are made by religious scholars to restrain emotions expressed by parents towards their offspring. Scholars such as al-Ghazālī justify procreation itself as fulfilment of a religious duty, not as a means of satisfying personal worldly inspirations. From this point of view, exaggerated manifestations of love of children and deep sorrow on their death can be regarded as expressions of earthly values and protest against the divine decree.

Our tentative conclusions regarding concepts of childhood and attitudes towards children in medieval Muslim society should be examined in the light of other sources which so far have not been dealt with from this respect. Certain genres, such as *fatāwā* and *sijillāt* are expected to bear fruit also for the study of History of Childhood as reflected in the reality of the lives of Muslim children in the past, a somewhat neglected dimension in this collection.

Notes

Preface

1. English translation: *Centuries of Childhood* (Harmondsworth, 1986). On Ariès's theses see particularly Chapter 6 and Conclusion below.

1: Introduction: History of Childhood in Islam

1. F. Rosenthal, 'Child psychology in Islam', *Islamic Culture* 26(1952), p. 2.
2. L. DeMause, 'What is psychohistory?', *The Journal of Psychohistory* 9(1981), pp. 181, 183.
3. L. DeMause, 'The evolution of childhood' in L. DeMause (ed.), *The History of Childhood* (New York, 1974), p. 3. See also: D. Hunt, *Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France* (New York and London, 1970), pp. 15–17 (on Erik Erikson's theory of psycho-social development).
4. DeMause, *ibid.*, p. 2.
5. Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima* (ed. M. Quatremère) (Paris, 1858), pt III, Ch. 39 [English translation by F. Rosenthal (Princeton, 1967)]. See below, Chapter 5.
6. S. Wilson, 'The myth of motherhood a myth: the historical view of European child-rearing', *Social History* 9(1984), p. 182.
7. See, for instance, above, note 1 and also H. Motzki, 'Das Kind und seine Sozialisation in der islamischen Familie des Mittelalters', in J. Martin and A. Nitscke (eds), *Zur Sozialgeschichte der Kindheit* (Munich, 1986), pp. 391–441; *id.*, 'Muslimische Kinderehen in Palästina während des 17. Jahrhunderts: Fatāwā als Quellen zur Sozialgeschichte', *Die Welt des Islams* 27(1987), pp. 82–90; G. Adamek, *Das Kleinkind in Glaube und Sitte der Araber im Mittelalter* (PhD thesis submitted to Bonn University, 1968).
For an introduction to Family History in Islam see Th. Bianquis, 'La famille en Islam arabe', in A. Burguière *et al.* (eds), *Histoire de la Famille* (Paris, 1986), pp. 557–601.
8. Baghdad, 1979.
9. L. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 22–3, 43–9; L. Demaitre, 'The idea of childhood and child care in medical writings of the Middle Ages', *The Journal of Psychohistory* 4(1976), pp. 461–2; M.M. McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates: children and parents from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries', in L. DeMause (ed.), *The History of Childhood* (New York, 1974), pp. 102, 136; Ph. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, pp. 31–47; R. B. Lyman, 'Barbarism and religion: Late Roman and early medieval childhood', in L. DeMause (ed.), *The History of Childhood*, pp. 78–80, 88; M. Goodich, 'Encyclopaedic literature: Child-rearing in the Middle Ages', *History of Education* 12(1983), esp. pp. 1–3; Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 191.
10. Sh. Shahar, 'Infants, infant care and attitudes towards infancy in medieval Lives of Saints', *The Journal of Psychohistory* 10(1983), pp. 281, 295; B.A. Hanawalt, 'Child-rearing among the lower classes of late medieval

England', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8(1977), pp. 1–3; E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou* (Harmondsworth, 1984), pp. VII–XVII, 204–21; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', pp. 101–2, 105–6; Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, pp. 68–9.

11. E.M. Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī*, Vol. I: 'Biography and Background' (Cambridge, 1975), p. 137. And see, for instance, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā*, edited and translated by W. E. Gohlman (Albany, 1974), pp. 16–32; Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*, French translation by F. Jabre (Beirut, 1959), Introduction, pp. 25–7; Usāma b. Munqidh, *Kitāb al-i'tibār*, English translation by P. Hitti under the title *An Arab – Syrian Gentleman and Warrior* (New York, 1929), Introduction and Table of Contents; R. Erwin, 'Driven by women' (a review article on Amin Maalouf's *Leo the African*) *The Times Literary Supplement* 26.8–1.9 1988, p. 928.
12. Sartain, *ibid.* and see also H.A.R. Gibb, 'Islamic biographical literature', in B. Lewis and P.M. Holt (eds), *Historians of the Middle East* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 56–7.
13. Adamek, *Das Kleinkind*, pp. 18–20. Arabic biographies have been partly utilised for studies of history of Muslim education but mainly 'higher', not 'elementary' education. See, for instance, Munir ud-Dīn Aḥmad, *Muslim Education and the Scholars' Social Status up to the 5th Century Muslim Era in the Light of Ta'rikh Baghdād* (Zurich, 1968), p. 40:

It was not the main concern of the compiler of *Ta'rikh Baghdād* (a comprehensive biographical dictionary from the eleventh century including almost eight thousand entries), and this applies to the whole of the biographical literature, to report about the elementary education.

See also R.W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study of Medieval Islamic Social History* (Harvard, 1972), pp. 47–60, 249–55; *id.*, 'The age structure of medieval Islamic education', *Studia Islamica* 57(1983), pp. 105–17.

14. J.E. Mandaville, 'The Ottoman court records of Syria and Jordan', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 86(1966), p. 311.
15. 'Waṣīyyat Aflātūn fī ta'dīb al-aḥdāth' (ed. L. Cheikho), in L. Ma'lūf *et al.* (eds), *Maqālāt falsafīyya qadīma li-ba'd mashāhīr falāsīfat al-'Arab* (Beirut, 1908), pp. 52–8.
16. M. Plessner, *Der Oikonomikos des Neupythagorees Bryson* (Heidelberg, 1928) (Orient und Antike 5). See also below, Chapter 4.
17. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhḷāq wa-tathīr al-a'rāq* (Cairo, 1329/1911), p. 46: 'Fī ta'dīb al-aḥdāth wa-al-ṣibyān khāṣat^{an}'.
18. Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Cairo, 1967), Vol. III, pp. 92–5; 'Bayān al-tarīq fī ri'yādat al-ṣibyān fī awwal nushū'ihim wa-wajh ta'dībihim wa-tahsīn akhlāqihim' See below, Chapter 4.
19. Ibn 'Abbās al-Majūsī, *Kāmil al-ṣinā'a al-tibbiyya* (Bulaq, 1877), Vol. II, pp. 51–8; 'Alī Ibn Sīnā *al-Qānūn fī al-tibb* (Bulaq, 1294/1877), Vol. I, pp. 150–8 [see also E. Khale, *Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) über Kinderkrankheiten im Kinderregimen seines Qānūn* (Erlangen, 1979)]; 'Alī Ibn Hubal, *Kitāb al-mukhtārāt fī al-tibb* (Haydarabad, 1362/1943), Vol. I, pp. 187–200. See also Motzki, 'Das Kind', p. 426.

- On Hippocratic writings, dealing partly or wholly with embryology and pediatrics, translated into Arabic see, for instance, F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden, 1967), Vol. III, pp. 28–32 (*al-Fuṣūl*), p. 38 (*Kitāb al-ajinna*), p. 41 (*Kitāb al-mawlūdīn li-thamāniyat ashshur*), p. 45 (*Kitāb fī nabāt al-asnān*), p. 46 (*Kitāb al-mawlūdīn li-sabʿat ashshur*). On the Arabic translation of Galen's treatise dealing with epileptic children, namely, *Fī 'ilāj ṣabiyy yuṣra'u*, see *ibid.*, pp. 74, 116. On the special interest of Arab physicians in Galen's writings see M. Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine* (Edinburgh, 1978), pp. 10, 11; O. Temkin, *Galenism: Rise and Decline of Medical Philosophy* (Ithaca and London, 1973), pp. 68–93.
20. R. Etienne, 'Ancient medical conscience and the life of children', *The Journal of Psychohistory* 4 (1976), pp. 131, 144, 152–3; D. Alexandre-Bidon and M. Closson, *L'Enfant à l'ombre des cathédrales* (Lyon, 1985), p. 10; Demaitre, 'The idea of childhood', p. 463. On pediatric writings in medieval Europe see also Shahar, 'Infants, infant care', pp. 282–5; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', p. 113.
 21. Ibn al-Jazzār al-Qayrawānī, *Siyāsāt al-ṣibyān wa-tadbīruhum*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb al-Hīla (Tunis, 1968). See also M.W. Dols, *Medieval Islamic Medicine: Ibn Riḍwān's Treatise 'On The Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt'* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 67–9.
 22. An even earlier treatise by the well-known physician Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Zakariyā al-Rāzī (ninth–tenth centuries) was devoted to specific aspects of pediatrics, namely, questions connected with smallpox and measles. See al-Rāzī, *A Treatise on the Small-Pox and Measles*, translated by W.A. Greenhill (London, 1848).
 23. Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsāt al-ṣibyān*, pp. 86–7, 135–8.
 24. *Ibid.*, pp. 60–9.
 25. *Ibid.*, pp. 86–133.
 26. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 28 (editor's introduction).
 28. 'Arīb b. Saʿīd al-Qurtubī, *Kitāb khalq al-janīn wa-tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-al-mawlūdīn*, eds H. Jahier and N. Abdelqader (Algiers, 1956).
 29. Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine*, pp. 22, 112–14. On Muslim interpretations of the Hippocratic sub-division of childhood, see below, Chapter 3, note 25.
 30. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Baladī, *Kitāb tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-al-aṣfāl wa-al-ṣibyān wa-ḥifẓ ṣiḥḥatihim wa-mudāwāt al-amrād al-ʿarīḍa lahum*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Ḥājī Qāsim Muḥammad (Baghdad, 1980). See also R. Dagorn, 'Al-Baladī: un médecin obstétricien et pédiatre à l'époque des premiers Fatimides du Caire', *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales du Caire* 9 (1967), pp. 73–93; Ullmann, *ibid.*, pp. 38–9.
 31. Al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, pp. 77–9.
 32. *Ibid.*, pp. 75–6.
 33. *Ibid.*, pp. 126–32.
 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 16–20 (editor's introduction).
 35. *Ibid.*, 'al-Maqāla al-thāniya', esp. pp. 182 ff.
 36. *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 208–21.
 37. *Ibid.*, and see also pp. 24–6 (editor's introduction). Philological

sources also contain references to the stages of development and age groups of children. See, for example, Thābit Ibn Abī Thābit, *Kitāb khalq al-insān* (Kuwait, 1965), pp. 1–12, 15–20, 28; Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibn Sida, *Kitāb al-mukhaṣṣaṣ* (Bulaq, 1316/1898–9), Vol. I, pp. 30–4. See also Adamek, *Das Kleinkind*, pp. 16–18.

38. Al-Baladī, *ibid.*.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 28 (editor's introduction).
40. Abū al-Ḥasan Sa‘īd Ibn Hibat Allāh, *Khalq al-insān* (MS. The Bodleian Library, Oxford), Pococke 66.
41. See below, Chapter 2. Titles of pediatric works which have not survived can be found in Arabic bio-bibliographical literature. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, for instance, mentions in his *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’* (Cairo, 1882), Vol. II, pp. 21–2, a treatise by Ibn Mandawayh al-Ḥṣfahānī titled *al-Risāla fī awjā’ al-atfāl*. Ismā‘īl Pasha al-Baghdādī mentions in his *Hadiyyat al-‘arīfīn* (Istanbul, 1951–5), Vol. I, p. 560, Vol. II, p. 515 *Kitāb al-janīn* by ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. ‘Alī al-Dakhwār and a work with the same title by Ibn Māsawayh.
42. J. La Baume, *Tafsīl āyāt al-Qur’ān al-ḥakīm* [*Le Koran analyse*] (Cairo, 1955), pp. 552–3; R. Roberts, *The Social Laws of the Qur’ān* (London, 1971), pp. 40–52. On Qur’ānic attitudes towards children see more in detail in the following chapters, especially 2 and 8.
43. A.J. Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition* (Leiden, 1960), pp. 43–4.
44. See, for instance, Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi’ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. L. Krehl, Vol. III (Leiden, 1868), pp. 512–14; Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh* (Najaf, 1378/1958–9), Vol. III, pp. 316–17.
45. See below, Chapter 3.
46. Ibn Bābawayh, *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 305–9. See also Chapter 2 below.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 318–19 and see below, Chapter 4.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 316–18 and see below, Chapter 6.
49. See below, Chapter 6.
50. See below, Chapter 4.
51. Shams al-Dīn al-Sarakhsī, *Kitāb al-mabsūṭ* (Cairo, 1324/1905–6). See, for instance, Vol. 26, pp. 185–8.
52. *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, pp. 118–29. A great variety of themes touching on children is also included in ‘Abdallāh b. Aḥmad Ibn Qudāma’s *al-Mughnī* (Beirut, 1972). See, for instance, Vol. I, p. 647 (on child education), Vol. II, p. 314 (on questions connected with the washing of infants and children), pp. 348, 372 (on prayers for deceased children), Vol. II, pp. 90, 195–6, 200–1 (on the religious duties of children), Vol. IX, pp. 299, 301 (on the parents’ right of custody), p. 313 (on nursing). In the following chapters use is made of other collections of law as well.
53. See Motzki, ‘Muslimische Kinderehen in Palästina’ esp. pp. 82, 89 (on the importance of *fatāwā* for Family History in Islam).
54. *Fatāwā Qādī Khān* (Calcutta, 1835), Vol. II, pp. 314–6, Vol. IV, p. 441. See also Chapter 6 below.
55. Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī, *al-Masā’il al-manthūra – fatāwā al-Imām al-Nawawī* (Beirut, 1972), p. 88. See Chapters 4 and 6 below.
56. Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘at fatāwā*

- (Cairo, 1326/1908–9), Vol. I, pp. 43–4, Vol. II, pp. 241–8, Vol. IV, pp. 182; id., *al-Akhbār al-ʿilmiyya min al-ikhtiyārāt al-fiqhiyya min fatāwā Ibn Taymiyya* (Beirut, n.d.), pp. 283–4, 287–8; id., *al-Fatāwā al-kubrā* (Cairo 1965), Vol. I, p. 52. See below, especially Chapter 8.
57. Ibn Ḥajar al-Makkī al-Haytamī, *al-Fatāwā al-fiqhiyya al-kubrā* (Cairo, 1890), Vol. II, pp. 19–20. See below, Chapter 6.
 58. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī (Ibn al-Ukhuwwa), *Maʾālim al-qurba fī aḥkām al-ḥisba*, ed. R. Levy (London, 1938), Chapter 46; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn Bassām al-Muḥtasib, *Nihāyat al-rutba fī ṭalab al-ḥisba*, ed. Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Samarraʾī (Baghdad, 1968), Chapter 75.
 59. Muḥammad Ibn Saḥnūn, *Kitāb ādāb al-muʾallimīn* (Tunis, 1972).
 60. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Khalaf al-Qābisī, *al-Risāla al-mufaṣṣṣila li-aḥwāl al-mutaʾallimīn wa-aḥkām al-muʾallimīn wa-al-mutaʾallimīn*, ed. Muḥammad Fuʾād al-Ahwānī (Cairo, 1968).
 61. Ibn Ḥajar al-Makkī al-Haytamī, *Tahrīr al-maqāl fī ādāb wa-aḥkām wa-fawāʾid yaḥtāju ilayhā muʾaddib al-aṭfāl* (MS. The National and University Library, Jerusalem), Yah. Ar. 316.
 62. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuḥfat al-mawdūd fī aḥkām al-mawlūd* (Bombay, 1961). For more details on Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya and his treatise, see below, Chapter 2.
 63. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*, pp. 5–13.
 64. See below, Chapter 3.
 65. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*, pp. 128–31.
 66. *Ibid.*, pp. 133–45. See below, Chapter 2.
 67. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
 68. Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh Muhibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī (?), *Ḥuqūq al-awlād wa-taʿdībuhum wa-wiqāyatuhum al-nār wa-al-ahl* (MS. The Library of the University of Leiden), Or. 2427.
 69. Al-Baghdādī, *Ḥadiyyat al-ʿarifīn*, Vol. I, pp. 398–9.
 70. See: Ḥājjī Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, ed. G. Flügel (London, 1835–58), Vol. II, p. 289. See also: C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden 1937–49), G II, p. 74; S II, p. 79.
 71. (MS. Der Staatsbibliothek, Berlin), 2660 (Lbg. 187). See: Brockelmann, *GAL*, G II, p. 13; S II, p. 6.
 72. (Medina, 1380/1960). See also Brockelmann *GAL*, G II, p. 76, S II, p. 82.
 73. (Cairo, 1887). For manuscripts see, for instance: (The Library of the University of Leiden), Or. 14.350; (The Bodleian Library, Oxford), Marsh 583; (The British Library), Or. 9765; (The Mingana Collection, Birmingham), Ar. 165(1011). See also: Brockelmann, *GAL*, G II, p. 76, S II, p. 83. (The references in this book are to the manuscript of the Bodleian Library).
 74. (MS. The British Library, London), Or. 7837; (MS. Chester Beatty, Dublin) Ar. 3463; (MS. Chester Beatty) Ar. 5174. See also: Brockelmann, *GAL*, S II, p. 33.
 75. (MS. The Mingana Collection), Ar. 469 (1174 III). Another treatise by al-Suyūṭī with a similar title, namely, *al-Iḥtifāl fī suʾāl al-aṭfāl* deals with the putting of questions to the recently deceased child by Munkar and Nakīr, the angels who examine the dead in their graves. See: Brockelmann, *GAL*, G II, p. 151.

76. (MS. The Library of the University of Leiden), Or. 474, Or. 14.124; (MS. The Mingana Collection), Ar. 460(772 IV). See also Brockelmann, *GAL*, G II, p. 148, S II, p. 185.
77. (Ms. The Library of the University of Leiden), Or. 14.124. See also: Brockelmann, *GAL* S II, p. 190.
78. See: 'Umar b. Aḥmad al-Shammā', *Fihrist asmā' mu'allafāt al-Suyūṭī* (MS. The Library of Cambridge University), Qq89¹, fol. 4b.
79. See: Ḥājī Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, Vol. II, p. 493.
80. (MS. Chester Beatty), 4132/1. See also: Brockelmann, *GAL*, G II, p. 305, S II, p. 416.
81. This title is mentioned by Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Sulwat al-ḥazīn*, fol. 8a.
82. Al-Sakhāwī, *Irtiyāḥ al-akbād* (MS. The British Library), Or. 7837, fol. 165b.
83. See *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1961), p. 226 (s.v. 'Consolatio'). I wish to thank Dr Menahem Luz for his advice concerning the Greco-Roman consolation literature.
84. On the Judeo-Arabic treatise see S. Abramson, *Ba-Merkazim uba-tesusoth bi-thequfath ha-ge'onim* (Jerusalem, 1965), Chapter VI. (Although the deceased son referred to in the consolation treatise was probably not an infant or a child, some of its motifs are similar to those of the Islamic treatises). The English compilation, *Comfort for parents mourning over their hopeful children that die young*, by T. Whitaker, is mentioned by K. Thomas in his *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1971), pp. 81–2.
85. F. Rosenthal, 'Literature' in J. Schacht and C.E. Bosworth (eds), *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 324–5; id., 'Fiction and reality: sources for the role of sex in medieval Muslim society' in A.L. al-Sayyid-Marsot (ed.), *Society and the Sexes in Medieval Islam* (Malibu, 1979), p. 15.
86. See, for example, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā' wa-muḥāwarāt al-shu'arā'* (Beirut, 1961), Vol. II, p. 53; Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* (Cairo, 1938), Vol. II, pp. 84–5; id., *Kitāb al-bayān wa'l-tabayīn* (Cairo, 1956), Vol. II, p. 75; Abdallāh b. Muslim Ibn Qutayba, *'Uyūn al-akhbār* (Cairo, 1925), Vol. V, pp. 166–8.
87. Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-aghānī* (Haifa, n.d.), Vol. III, p. 155, Vol. VII, p. 68, Vol. XIX, pp. 320–1. For references to other poems of this genre, see Ibrahim Muḥammad Ṣubayḥ, *al-Tuḥfah fī al-shi'r al-'arabī al-ḥadīth* (Qatar, 1985), pp. 74–8 and below, Chapter 6.
88. Abū 'Alī Ismā'īl b. al-Qāsim al-Qālī, *Kitāb al-amālī* (Cairo, 1324/1906–7), Vol. II, p. 117. On the child's image and the attitudes towards children as reflected in classical Arabic poetry in general, see Ṣubayḥ, *ibid.*, Chapter 2.
89. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, Vol. I, pp. 320–1.
90. Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, Vol. I, pp. 287, 324–7, Vol. III, pp. 393–7, Vol. V, pp. 336–7. For more materials on children and childhood in *adab* literature see, for instance, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 47 (on child education); al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa'l-tabayīn*, Vol. II, pp. 205–6 (on child education); Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Bayhaqī *al-Maḥāsīn wa-al-masāwī* (Beirut, 1960), pp. 547, 575–80 (on child education); Abū 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-farīd* (Cairo, 1975), Vol. II, pp. 435–7 (on child education), pp. 437–40 (on parent-child relations); Shihāb

- al-Dīn al-Abshihī, *al-Mustaṭraf* (Cairo, 1952), Vol. II, pp. 10–13 (on the rights of children).
91. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, esp. Chapter 2. On miniatures as a source for History of Childhood in medieval Europe see Alexandre-Bidon and Closson, *L'Infant à l'ombre des cathédrales*, pp. 8–10.
 92. See, for instance, R. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (Geneva, 1962), p. 116; B. Gray, *Persian Painting* (Geneva, 1961), pp. 123, 144; A. Sakisian, *La miniature persane* (Paris, 1929), Plate LXXXIX, Fig. 151; Plate LXXXV, Fig. 152; Th. Arnold, *Painting in Islam* (Oxford, 1928), p. 100, Plate XXV; B.W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1958), p. 180, no. 1221.
 93. See for instance, A.C. Inchbold, *Under Syria Sun* (London, 1906), pp. 412–17 (on the child in Muslim families in Jerusalem); J. Neil. *Everyday Life in the Holy Land* (London, 1920), pp. 56, 59 (on treating new-born infants). I would like to thank Dr Ilan Pappé for drawing my attention to these sources.
 94. E. Friedl, 'Parents and children in a village in Iran', in A. Fathi (ed.), *Women and the Family in Iran* (Leiden, 1985), pp. 195–211, esp. pp. 195–8, 201, 202 (I wish to thank Dr Uri M. Kupferschmidt for bringing this article to my attention); H. Ammar, *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village: Silwa Province of Aswan* (London, 1966), esp. Chapters IV–VI. Examples of other works in this area which should be consulted are H. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood Among the Arabs* (Helsinki, 1947); id., *Child Problems among the Arabs*, (Helsinki and Copenhagen, 1950); E.T. Prothro, *Child Rearing in the Lebanon* (Harvard, 1961).
 95. Friedl, *ibid.*, pp. 207–8, note 4 (see also Ammar, *ibid.*, pp. 144–60) and cf. M.M. Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids* (London and New York, 1979), pp. 272–4. For comparison between childhood in medieval and contemporary Muslim society we have occasionally made use also of Nayra Atiya's *Khul-Khaal: Five Egyptian Women Tell Their Stories* (Syracuse, 1982), which includes illuminating testimonies to the lives of children within the lower social classes in Egypt today. I would like to thank Professor Gad Gilbar for drawing my attention to this book.

2: *Tuhfat al-Mawdūd* – an Islamic Childrearing Manual from the Fourteenth Century

1. *Ḥanābila* (single *Ḥanbalī*) denotes the followers of the school of theology, law and morality which grew out of the teaching of the prominent traditionist Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855). See *ET*², Vol. III, p. 158 (s.v. 'Ḥanābila').
 Damascus *Ḥanābila* had been strongly fortified in the thirteenth century by the forced migration of scholars from Ḥarrān in Mesopotamia who, fleeing the Mongols, came to Damascus for their safety. In the first half of the fourteenth century, the city as a whole entered a period of splendour and expansion. Governor Tankiz (1312–40) endowed new schools, mosques, and other institutions. See: M.I. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 22, 112.
2. *ET*², Vol. III, p. 821 (s.v. 'Ibn Qayyim al-Djawziyya').
3. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya himself compiled a collection of *ḥadīth* reports

on health and medicine entitled, like many compilations of this genre, *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī* ['Prophetic Medicine']. But he did not refrain from weaving elements of Hellenistic medicine even into a collection of this sort. See: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī* (Mecca, 1958 ?), esp. pp. 317, 318, 320, 321, 322.

4. See: F. Rosenthal, 'The physician in medieval Muslim society', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 52(1978), pp. 480–3; G. Leiser, 'Medical education in Islamic lands from the seventh to the fourteenth century', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 38(1983), pp. 50–1; D. Behrens-Abouseif, *Faṭḥ Allāh and Abū Zakariyā: Physicians under the Mamlūks* (Cairo, 1987) (Supplément aux Annales Islamologique, Cahier no. 10), pp. 8–11.
5. Medieval and modern biographers completely ignore Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's interest in medicine. See, for instance, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Rajab, *Kitāb al-dhayl 'alā ṭabaqāt al-Hanābila* (Cairo, 1372/1953), Vol. II, pp. 447–51; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī 'ayān al-mī'a al-thāmina* (Haydarahad, 1928–31), Vol. III, pp. 400–3; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *Kitāb bughyat al-wu'āt* (Cairo, 1908), p. 25; Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-al-nihāya* (Beirut, 1977), Vol. XIV, pp. 234–5. See also: 'Awḍ Allāh Jād Ḥijāzī, *Ibn al-Qayyim wa-mawqifuhu min al-taḥkīr al-Islāmī* (Cairo, 1972), pp. 11–12, 42–50.
6. See above, Introduction and Chapter 3 below. Even today, *Tuḥfat al-mawḍūd* is recommended to Muslim parents as a useful educational guide. See Maḥmūd Maḥdī al-Istānbūlī, *Tuḥfat al-'arūs: al-zawāj al-Islāmī al-sā'id* (n.p., n.d.), p. 229. I wish to thank Dr Lawrence Conrad for drawing my attention to this book.
7. B.F. Musallam, *Sex and Society in Islam* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 55. See also pp. 49–52.
8. '*Fī dhikr fuṣūl nāfi'a fī tarbiyat al-atfāl tuḥmadu 'awāqibuhā 'inda al-kibar*' ['Useful sections concerning (methods of) rearing infants whose results will be praised when the child is grown up'].
9. See Introduction, above.
10. See, for example, al-Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūt*, Vol. XV, pp. 118–29.
11. D. Campbell, *Arabian Medicine and its Influence on the Middle Ages* (Amsterdam, 1974), p. 3.
12. See below, Chapter 4.
13. The medieval Muslim doctor,

when dealing with the phenomenon of illness was not trying to discover new knowledge, or to reinterpret the processes which go on in the human body, or to develop new and more adequate therapies. For him, the literature of the ancients is both example and authority; he believes that in it a certain natural truth is laid down which he can only think about, develop, and comment on.

Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine*, pp. 23–4. see also: Demaître, 'The idea of childhood', p. 467.

14. See, for instance, McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', p. 136; Lyman, 'Barbarism and religion', pp. 76, 90, 95; Shahar, 'Infants, infant care', p. 285.

15. On al-Baladī see Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, '*Uyūn al-anbā'*', Vol. I, p. 247, on Ibn al-Jazzār al-Qayrawānī see above, Introduction.
16. See: Rosenthal, 'The physician in medieval Muslim society', p. 477.
17. A.J. Stewart et al., 'Coding categories for the study of child-rearing from historical sources', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4(1975), p. 689.
18. Etienne, 'Ancient medical conscience', p. 131 and see also: Soranus, *Gynecology* (translated by O. Temkin) (Baltimore, 1956), pp. 79–80. Etienne (ibid., p. 153) argues, moreover, that 'this side of ancient medical thinking would explain the way of thinking of an entire society, which seems to have been little affected by the loss of children'. However, as we show in Chapter 6 below, adult reactions to infant and child death in medieval Islamic society were in many cases totally different. The genre of consolation treatises for bereaved parents referred to in the Introduction, above, is a clear indication of that.
19. Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān*, p. 57; al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 76; al-Majūsī, *Kāmil al-ṣinā'a*, Vol. II, p. 51.
20. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 173–5 (Chapter 17).
21. Ibid, p. 137. See also al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 206; Galen, *Hygiene* (translated by R.M. Green) (Springfield, 1951), p. 25.
22. Al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, pp. 182–6. See also: al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn*, pp. 57–8; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān*, p. 77; Ibn Hibat Allāh, *Khalq al-insān*, fols. 53a–53b.
23. Cf. Soranus, *Gynecology*, p. 82.
24. A.J. Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*, p. 43; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 174, 176 (Chapter 17).
25. For a detailed sub-division of childhood attributed to Hippocrates see Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān*, pp. 86–8. Ibn al-Jazzār divides the life of infants and children into four periods: infancy proper from birth to dentition; second infancy from dentition to the age of seven; childhood from the age of seven to fourteen; the age of transition from childhood to puberty starting at the age of fourteen. An even more detailed division is offered by al-Qurṭubī, (*Khalq al-janīn*, pp. 57–60): I. from birth to forty days – a period characterised by drastic changes (see above); II. from forty days to the appearance of molar teeth, at the age of seven months, a stage characterised, *inter alia*, by the beginning of the development of the senses as well as the imagination and the intellectual qualifications; III. from dentition to the growth of the child's hair, a stage characterised by further intellectual development as well as by weaning and the beginning of his talking and walking; IV. this stage, which is defined in a similar way to the third one, that is, from dentition to the growth of the hair, is characterised by the increase in the child's energy, development of his intellectual ability and excellent memory. Cf. Demaitre, 'The idea of childhood', pp. 465–6.
26. Al-Ghazālī (*Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 92) suggests the appearance of the sense of shame as the criterion to identify the age of discrimination. See below, Chapter 4.
27. See below, Chapter 4.
28. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 180–2. See also, for instance, Abū Muḥammad 'Abdallāh al-Dārimī, *Sunan* (Medina 1966),

- '*Kitāb al-siyar*', bāb 26; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, p. 208, and *El²*, Vol. I, p. 993 (s.v. 'Bāligh').
29. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 176.
 30. Al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 76: 'The care of infants and children from the hygienic as well as the therapeutic point of view should be unique and suitable so that they will benefit from it and be protected against any hurt which can occur due to their weakness and inability ...'.
 31. See note 8, above. On the long-term influence of the mother's milk see below. On the long-term influence of moral education of young children see below, Chapter 4 and Motzki, 'Das Kind', p. 432.
 32. See, for instance, Soranus, *Gynecology*, pp. 88–103, 108–13, 117–19.
 33. Soranus (*ibid.*, p. 89) argues that the mother's milk is not suitable for the baby during the first twenty days after birth. The mother should have the opportunity to recover and strengthen, and only then to start suckling.
 34. The mother's milk is regarded as the most suitable food for the infant since it was thought to be made of the blood of which the foetus is nourished in the womb. The new-born infant is therefore supposed to be accustomed to it. See: Galen, *Hygiene*, p. 24; Soranus, *Gynecology*, p. 90; Ibn Sīnā *al-Qānūn*, p. 151; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān*, p. 62; al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, pp. 186–7; Ibn Hibāt Allāh, *Khalq al-insān*, fol. 62b.
 35. Ibn al-Jazzār, *ibid.*, pp. 70–7; al-Baladī, *ibid.*, pp. 187–94; al-Qurṭubī, *Kitāb khalq al-janīn*, pp. 54–7.
 36. V. Fildes, *Wet Nursing: A History from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 1, 4, 12.
 37. See, for instance, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, pp. 207–8.
 38. See, for instance, Soranus, *Gynecology*, pp. 90–101. See also: Etienne, 'Ancient medical conscience', p. 148; Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, pp. 15–16. In medieval Europe, preachers and doctors recommended maternal suckling, and this practice was common among the middle and lower classes. See: Shahr, 'Infants, Infant Care', pp. 283, 284, 289, 295, 296; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', pp. 115, 116; Demaitre, 'The Idea of childhood', p. 474; Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, p. 208; Hannawalt, 'Childrearing among the lower classes', p. 14. On a similar trend in medieval Mediterranean Jewry, see: S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, Vol. III (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1978), p. 233.
 39. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 137. See also: 'Abd al-Mālik Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (ed. F. Wüstenfeld) (Göttingen, 1858), Vol. I, pp. 102–7; Muḥammad Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* (eds E. Sachau et al.) (Leiden, 1905–40), Vol. I/1, pp. 67–73.
 40. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn*, pp. 151–3; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān*, pp. 70–2, 75–7; al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn*, pp. 54–7; Ibn Hibāt Allāh, *Khalq al-insān*, fol. 62b.
 41. Shahr, 'Infants, Infant Care', p. 290; Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, p. 45. Soranus (*Gynecology*, pp. 110, 111) advises giving infants milk 'several times but not incessantly' and 'above all...not always (to) give the child (the) breast because he cries'.
 42. Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān*, p. 62; al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 201.
 43. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 138. See also: Soranus,

- Gynecology*, p. 111. Ibn al-Jazzār (*Siyāsāt al-ṣibyān*, pp. 65, 68) and al-Baladī (*Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, pp. 207, 217) distinguish between a short period of crying period and a continuous one. They warn parents against ignoring the latter. See also: Ibn Hibāt Allāh, *Khalq al-insān*, fols 53a, 65b.
44. Soranus, *Gynecology*, pp. 92–3. See also: Galen, *Hygiene*, p. 29.
 45. Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, pp. 6, 8, 38; Shahar, 'Infants, infant care', p. 183; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', p. 115.
 46. N.E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception* (New York, 1970), pp. 71, 73, 74.
 47. Fildes, *ibid.*, p. 9.
 48. Ibn Sinā, *al-Qānūn*, p. 153; al-Majūsī, *Kāmil al-ṣinā'a*, Vol. II, p. 57; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsāt al-ṣibyān*, pp. 76–7; al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, pp. 193–4; al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn*, p. 56. This attitude is still prevalent in Muslim societies, as can be learnt from contemporary anthropological research. See, for instance, Friedl, 'Parents and children', p. 203.
 49. Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*, p. 112 (s.v. 'Inter-course'); Musallam, *Sex and Society*, pp. 15–16.
 50. A.J. Wensinck et al., *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane* (Leiden, 1936–70), Vol. II, p. 447: '*Lā taqtulū awlādakum sirr^{an}*'.
 51. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 141–2.
 52. Qur'ān 2:233, 31:14.
 53. Al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, pp. 206, 210; Ibn Sinā, *al-Qānūn*, p. 153; al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn*, p. 74. See also: al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, p. 207.
 54. Soranus, *Gynecology*, p. 118. See also: Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, pp. 7, 23–4; Etienne, 'Ancient medical conscience', p. 148; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', p. 116; Shahar, 'Infants, infant care', p. 298. On the length of the breastfeeding period in medieval Jewish society see: Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, Vol. III, p. 233; S. Kottek, 'Childhood in medieval Jewry as depicted in *Sefer Ḥasidim* (twelfth to thirteenth century): medical, psychological and educational aspects', *Koroth*, 8(1984), p. 380.
 55. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 137.
 56. *Ibid.*, p. 140; al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 210; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsāt al-ṣibyān*, p. 66. See also: Etienne, 'Ancient medical conscience', p. 148. On the other hand, Soranus (*Gynecology*, p. 118) refers to the spring as the appropriate season for weaning.
 57. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*; Ibn Sinā *al-Qānūn*, p. 153; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsāt al-ṣibyān*, p. 66; al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 210; Ibn Hibāt Allāh, *Khalq al-insān*, fol. 66a. See also: Soranus, *Gynecology*, p. 118.
 58. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 137. See also: Ibn Sinā, *al-Qānūn*, *ibid.*; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsāt al-ṣibyān*, pp. 66–7; al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, pp. 210–11; al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn*, p. 74; Ibn Hibāt Allāh, *ibid.* The diet suggested by Soranus (*Gynecology*, p. 117) is purely vegetarian.
 59. Al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 211; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsāt al-ṣibyān*, p. 67. Soranus (*Gynecology*, p. 117) refers to 'artificial nipples, for out of these it (the infant) draws the fluid little by little as from the breast, without being harmed'. See also: Etienne, 'Ancient medical conscience',

pp. 149–50 and plates 7–10; DeMause, 'The evolution of childhood', p. 36; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', p. 117.

60. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 140. See also: al-Majūsī, *Kāmil al-šinā'a*, Vol. II, p. 58; al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 211; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān*, p. 67; Ibn Hibat Allāh, *Khalq al-insān*, fol. 66a.
61. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*, p. 143, and see below, Chapter 4.
62. Etienne, 'Ancient medical conscience', p. 145.
63. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 138. See also: Soranus, *Gynecology*, pp. 84–7; Ibn Hibat Allāh, *Khalq al-insān*, fol. 51b. Al-Baladī (*Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, pp. 202, 215) warns parents against restricting the child's movements. This warning indicates that, in general, the child was not expected to move much. Cf. N. Atiya, *Khul-Khaal*, p. 152.
64. Cf. DeMause, 'The evolution of childhood', p. 50.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 37–8; Shahar, 'Infants, infant care', p. 292. On the other hand, Wilson ('The myth of motherhood', pp. 194, 195) draws attention to the positive aspects of swaddling:

In the environment of Early Modern Europe, swaddling kept babies warm and out of harm's way as no other procedure – however mistakenly according to modern pediatric practice – as having an important positive role to play in supporting the infant's body and making it grow straight. . . .

See also: Demaitre, 'The idea of childhood', pp. 471, 472; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', pp. 113–14. Hanawalt ('Childrearing', p. 14), however, finds no clear evidence that infants in England of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were swaddled at all.

66. Demaitre, *ibid.*, p. 472.
67. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 138.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 141. See also: Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn*, pp. 153–4; al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 215; Ibn Hibat Allāh, *Khalq al-insān*, fol. 66a, and see: Demaitre, *ibid.*, p. 475.
69. See al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn*, p. 74 where the baby-walker is designated also as *darrāja*. See also: Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, Vol. II, p. 266 (s.v. *d.r.j.*). Cf. McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', p. 118.
70. Al-Qurṭubī, *ibid.*
71. Al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 207; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān*, p. 68; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn*, pp. 153–4. See also: Soranus, *Gynecology*, pp. 115–16.
72. Al-Baladī, *ibid.*
73. See above and cf. Demaitre, 'The idea of childhood', p. 466.
74. Al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 209.
75. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 139. See also: al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn*, p. 66; Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān*, p. 107; al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 209.
76. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*; Ibn al-Jazzār, *ibid.*; al-Qurṭubī, *ibid.*; al-Baladī, *ibid.*, p. 207; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn*, p. 154. See also: Soranus, *Gynecology*, pp. 119–20.
77. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*; p. 137; al-Baladī, *ibid.*; al-Qurṭubī, *ibid.*, p. 74.

78. al-Baladī, *ibid.*; al-Qurṭubī, *ibid.*
79. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*, pp. 137–8.
80. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya devotes a whole chapter in *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* (pp. 59–87) to the issue of naming – *tasmiya*. See below, Chapter 3.
81. Al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, pp. 216–21.
82. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn*, p. 157.
83. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 138–9. See also: Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyā*, pp. 68–9, 100 (on children's nightmares, their causes and treatment); al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn*, p. 63; Ibn Hibāt Allāh, *Khalq al-insān*, fol. 65b. Interestingly enough, al-Baladī (*Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 208) regards the soothing effect of rocking and songs on the shocked child as an indication of the natural inclination of children in general towards gymnastics and music. See also: Aḥmad Abu Sa'd Aghānī *tarqīṣ al-atfāl 'inda al-'Arab* (Beirut, 1982), pp. 47–9.
84. See below, Chapter 4.
85. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*, pp. 142–3. See also: Ibn al-Jazzār, *ibid.*, pp. 134–8. Ibn al-Jazzār, in the final chapter of his treatise, discusses the relationships between innate and acquired traits and emphasises the importance of moral education of very young children. See below, Chapter 4 and cf. Friedl, 'Parents and children', p. 202.
86. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*, pp. 143–4.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
88. See below, Chapter 4.
89. *Ibid.*, pp. 144–5. See also: Ibn Sīnā, 'Kitāb al-siyāsa' (ed. L. Ma'lūf), *al-Mashriq* 9 (1906), pp. 1075, 1076, and cf. Demaître, 'The idea of childhood', p. 466.
90. *Batei hanhagat guf ha-bari* by Rabbi Shem Tov Ibn Palqira (died c. 1290) is an example of a popularised medical treatise written in medieval Jewish circles. Ibn Palqira, who wrote his treatise in verse, derived his knowledge on Hellenistic medicine from Maimonides. I wish to thank Professor Ron Barkai for drawing my attention to this treatise.
91. Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, pp. 43–6; Stewart, 'Coding Categories', p. 688.

3: On Tāhnik – An Early Islamic Childhood Rite

1. A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London and Henley, 1977), p. 3.
2. Motzki, 'Das Kind', p. 412. For the full list of childhood rites in Islam see, for instance, Abū Naṣr al-Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhilāq* (Cairo n.d.), p. 180.
3. *Iqāma* – the form of words chanted by the *muballigh* – the chanter in the mosque – consisting of the common words of the *adhān* with the addition of *qad qāmat al-ṣalāt* (the time of prayer has come) repeated twice. E. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London and Edinburgh, 1863–93), Suppl., p. 2966.
4. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 15–16 (on this treatise see above, Introduction and Chapter 2); Motzki, 'Das Kind', pp. 412–13.
5. Van Gennep, *ibid.*, p. 62. For a detailed discussion of *tasmiya* see Chapter 8 in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* (pp. 59–87). Here the author deals with the proper time for naming male children, with

recommended, ugly and even forbidden names (this discussion reflects the supposedly magical powers related to names), with the exclusive right of the father to choose the child's name (due to the fact that the child is genealogically related to his father) and so on. See also A. Schimmel, *Islamic Names* (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 14–24.

6. Van Gennep, *ibid.*, pp. 50, 53–4. The rites of haircut and sacrifice are dealt with in great detail in Chapters 6 and 7 of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Tuhfat al-mawdūd* (pp. 18–59). Here the religious dialectics of the ceremonies, known to have been of pagan origin, are discussed and therefore the question of whether these rites are obligatory or even permitted are raised. In addition, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya deals with the meaning of the term '*aqīqa*' (see below), with the significance of the rite and its proper time, with the question of '*aqīqa*' for female infants and with many technical details concerning the sacrifice.
7. Lane, *Arabic–English Lexicon*, Book I, part 5, p. 2097.
8. Motzki, 'Das Kind', pp. 414–15; Muḥammad Abū al-Ajfan, 'Ināyat al-Islām bi-al-ṭufūla min khilāl kitāb shar'at al-Islām', *al-Baḥth al-'ilmī* 34(1984), p. 225. Cf. the duty of the Jewish father to redeem the firstborn child if it is a son (*pidyon ha-ben*). On this rite see: *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971), Vol. V, p. 426 (s.v. 'Children').
9. Motzki, *ibid.*, p. 416.
10. Van Gennep, *ibid.*, p. 72. On female circumcision (generally designated *khafd*), see below, note 20 and pp. 40–1.
11. Van Gennep, *ibid.*, p. 71; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 106–9. Within the framework of Chapter 9 of his treatise (pp. 87–125) Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya deals with some other questions connected with circumcision. For instance, the meaning and significance of *khitān*, the legal status of the rite (various and sometimes contradictory opinions are presented), the proper time for performing circumcision, and female circumcision.
12. See, in addition to *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, mentioned above, al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn*, p. 81; *EI*² Vol. V, p. 20 (s.v. 'Khitān').
13. In the Qur'ān the root ḥ-n-k appears only once (17:62), in the eighth form, but not in connection with children.
14. For the religious motives and the significance of '*aqīqa*' and *khitān*, see Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 36, 109–12. Prophetic reports on *ta'dhīn*, namely, recitation the *adhān* in the ears of the newborn infant, also include explanation of its religious significance. See *ibid.*, pp. 15–16, esp. p. 16, where *sirr al-ta'dhīn* (the secret, the religious significance of the custom) is explained.
15. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. III, p. 512.
16. Lane, *Arabic–English Lexicon*, Book I, part 2, p. 659; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. III, p. 512 (the first *ḥadīth* in the first chapter (*bāb*) of *Kitāb al-aqīqa*); *ibid.*, p. 513 (the end of the fourth *ḥadīth* of the same *bāb*) and cf. Muslim, *ṣaḥīḥ* (Cairo, 1331/1912), Vol. VI, p. 175, where the term *taḥnūk* is replaced by *mash* (rubbing in, anointing).
17. For the blessing, see, for instance, Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. VI, p. 176 (Ā'isha narrated that male children used to be brought shortly after birth to the Prophet, and he blessed them and carried out the *taḥnūk*);

- Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Cairo, 1313/1895–6), Vol. III, pp. 181, 288, Vol. VI, pp. 212, 347. Some reports mention the *tasmiya* as an act taking place immediately before or after the *taḥnik*. See *ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 399.
18. See also Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*. Vol. VI, p. 347. On another occasion, the *taḥnik* was performed first, then the Prophet chewed a date and put it in the child's mouth. See *ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 181.
 19. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. VI, p. 174. See also Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. III, p. 106. That *ḥadīth*, although describing 'Abdallāh b. Abī Ṭalḥa being taken to the Prophet immediately after his birth for the *taḥnik* ceremony, mentions only the transferring of the chewed dates from Muḥammad's mouth to the child's and ignores the act of rubbing the child's palate.
 20. All the traditions dealing with *taḥnik* mention males – *ṣabīyy*, *ghulām* and so on. See, for example, the traditions mentioned in notes 16–19 above, and also Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuḥfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 17–18. On the performance of *'aḳīqa* for males as well as for females, see *ibid.*, pp. 21, 36–8. The difference was quantitative only; one sheep (or goat) was slaughtered for a female, whereas two were slaughtered for a male. Although circumcision was required for males, female circumcision, mentioned in note 10 above, was also known in Islam and recommended by some jurists. At least one of them considered it as obligatory as male circumcision. See *ibid.*, pp. 88, 89, 93, 95, 112, 114, 115; al-Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhḫāq*, p. 181, and see also *E.I.*², Vol. IV, pp. 913 (s.v. 'Khafḍ'), vol. V, p. 20 (s.v. 'Khitān').
 21. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. III, p. 512. The next *ḥadīth* report on the same page, (which is quoted above) ends with the words: '*wa-kāna awwala mawlūd*ⁿ *wulida fī al-Islām* [*'and he was the first child born in the Islamic era*]', that is, the firstborn son of the new Muslim community.
 22. Ibn al-Ḥājj al-ʿAbdārī, *al-Madkhal* (Beirut, 1972), Vol. III, pp. 305–11, on various popular practices and ceremonies performed on children.
 23. *Ibid.*, pp. 298–9.
 24. For example, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuḥfat al-mawdūd*, p. 32 (the performance of *'aḳīqa* as the father's duty), p. 79 (on the exclusive right of the father to choose his son's name); al-Ṭabarī, *Huqūq al-awlād*, fols. 25a–26b (on the ceremonial acts, including *ta'dhīn*, *taḥnik*, *tasmiya*, and *khitān* as the father's obligation).
 25. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuḥfat al-mawdūd*, p. 18: '*...fa-qāla* (Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal) *li-Umm 'Alī: "imḍaghī ḥadhā al-tamra wa-ḥannikihī", fa-fa'alat*.'
 26. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. III, pp. 105–6: '*fa-ḥamalat* (Umm Sulaym) *bi-'Abdallāh fa-waladathu layl^{an} wa-karihat an tuḥannikahu ḥattā yuḥannikahu Rasūl Allāhi ṣal'am...*', *ibid.*, p. 181: '*...fa-talid* (Umm Sulaym) *ghulām^{an}, qāla: fa-hīna aṣlahnā qāla li Abū Ṭalḥa: "iḥmilhu fī khirqaⁿ ḥattā ta'tiya bihi Rasūla Allāhi ṣal'am wa-iḥmil mā'aka tamr^{an} 'ajwat^{an}". Qāla: fa-ḥamalat^u fī khirqaⁿ wa-lam yuḥannak wa-lam yudhaq ṭa'ām^{an} wa-la shay^{an}.'*
 27. Al-Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhḫāq*, p. 181: '*wa-'an al-Ṣādiq...qāla: "ḥannikū awlādakum bi-al-tamri fa-in lam yakun fa-bi-mā' i al-furātī fa-in lam yakun fa-bi-mā' i al-samā' i".* See also Ibn Bābawayhi, *Man la yaḥḍuruḥu al-jaḳīh*, Vol. III, p. 315. I would like to thank Dr Vardit Rispler for bringing this reference to my attention.

28. R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leiden and Paris, 1927), Vol. I, p. 332. Ibn Hibat Allāh, in his *Khalq al-insān* (fol. 51a) and Ibn Hubal, in his *Kitāb al-mukhtārāt* (Vol. I, p. 189), mention, along with the instruction for the midwife, *taḥnik bi-al-ʿasal* (with honey) as one of the first acts to be performed on the newborn child but omit any explanation of its medicinal value. See also ʿAbdallāh ʿUlwān, *Tarbiyat al-awlād fī al-Islām* (Beirut, 1978), Vol. I, p. 75. It should be mentioned that ʿUlwān's assumption regarding the physical motives for *taḥnik* is not based on any medieval source.
29. Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsāt al-ṣibyān*; Ibn Sinā, *al-Qānūn*, Vol. I, pp. 150–4.
30. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 17.
31. Ibid., pp. 29–34, 97–106.
32. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Book I, part 2, p. 659. See also Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-Balāgha* (Cairo, 1953), p. 97: '*wa-ḥanaka al-dābbata... Ja'ala al-rasana fī fihā*'.
33. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. III, pp. 171, 175, 254, 288.
34. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 20, 21, 24, 39, 40, 45, 57, 93, 94, 120 and see *E.I.*², Vol. V, p. 20 (s.v. '*Khitān*').
35. On the Hebrew root *ḥ-n-kh* and the possible connection between *ḥekh* pl. *ḥinkhīm* ('palate'), on the one hand, and *ḥanakh* ('to inaugurate and initiate') as well as *ḥinnekh* ('to train', 'to educate'), on the other hand, see G. Gesenii, *Thesaurus Philologicus Criticus Linguae Hebraeae et Chaldaee Veteris Testamenti* (Leipzig, 1835), Vol. I, p. 498; E. Ben Yehuda, *Dictionary and Thesaurus of the Hebrew Language* (New York and London, 1960), Vol. III, pp. 1652–4.
36. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Book I, part 2, p. 659.
37. *Riyādat al-naḥs* is a very common expression in mystical literature. See, for instance, G.C. Anawati and L. Gardet, *Mystique musulmane* (Paris, 1961), p. 42; P. Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique* (Beirut, 1970), pp. 235, 305.
38. See, for example, the title of the chapter devoted to child education in al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' ʿulūm al-dīn*, Vol. III, p. 92: *Bayān al-ṭarīq fī riyādat al-ṣibyān...* See also below, Chapter 4.
39. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Book I, part 3, p. 1187.
40. Ibid., p. 1465.
41. Ibid.
42. This is the meaning of *siyāsa* in the title of Ibn Sinā's *Kitāb al-siyāsa* and in Ibn al-Jazzār's *Siyāsāt al-ṣibyān*.
43. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 37–8.
44. Ibid., pp. 93–8, 110–12. See also *E.I.*², Vol. IV, pp. 913–14 (s.v. '*Khafḍ*') and cf. Ammar, *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village*, pp. 116–24; O. Meinardus, 'Mythological, historical and sociological aspects of the practice of female circumcision among the Egyptians', *Acta Ethnographica* (Budapest) 16(1967), pp. 393–4.

4: Al-Ghazālī on Child Education

1. W. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* (Oxford, 1965), Vol. I, p. XIII.
2. H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (London, 1965), p. XIII.
3. Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, pp. 43–6.

4. *The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 111 (s.v. 'al-Ghazālī').
5. *EI*² Vol. II, p. 1038 (s.v. 'al-Ghazālī').
6. On al-Ghazālī, his works and his influence, see, for instance, *ibid.*, pp. 1039–41; A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975), pp. 91–7; G. Makdisi, 'The Sunni revival' in D.S. Richards (ed.), *Islamic Civilization 950–1150* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 155–68; H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazzālī* (Jerusalem, 1975), p. 523; D.B. Macdonald, 'The life of al-Ghazzālī with special reference to his religious experience and opinions', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 20(1899), pp. 77–132.
7. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, Vol. I, pp. 9–11. The Islamic tradition on the subject of the reviver of the religion sent by God at the beginning of each century of the Hijra is based on the *ḥadīth* report that appears in the *Sunan* of Abū Dā'ūd al-Sijistānī (*Kitāb al-malāḥim*, first section): 'Allāh, praised be He, will send to this nation at the beginning of each century one who will revive its religion for it.' In *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, eds Jamīl Ṣalībā and Kāmil 'Iyād (Beirut, 1967), p. 122, al-Ghazālī explicitly identifies himself as the reviver of the religion of his age: 'Allāh has promised to revive his religion at the beginning of every century and (now) he has facilitated my departure for Nishapur to fulfil this task' (by teaching in *al-Madrasa al-Nizāmiyya*, following a long period of retreat).
8. A. Gil'adi, 'Renewal of religion by education: some educational aspects of al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*', *Ha-Mizrah He-Hadash* 30(1986), pp. 13–15 (in Hebrew. English summary pp. V–VI).
9. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. I, pp. 70–83, esp. pp. 70, 72. See also A. Gil'adi, 'Islamic educational theories in the Middle Ages: some methodological notes with special reference to al-Ghazālī', *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 14(1988), p. 6.
10. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, pp. 92–5.
11. See, for example, Plato, *Protagoras*, pp. 325–6 [English translation: B. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato* (Oxford, 1924), Vol. I, pp. 146–7]; Jālinūs (Galen), *Kitāb al-akhlāq (mukhtaṣar)* in P. Kraus, *Dirāsāt fī ta'rīkh al-tarjama* (Cairo, 1939), pp. 29, 31; Plessner, *Oikonomikoc*, p. 182; Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-siyāsa*, p. 1073; Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, p. 48. On the difficulty of acquiring good qualities as age increases, see al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, p. 519, and and above, Chapter 2.
12. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions in Islam*, pp. 55–7, and see below.
13. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, pp. 11, 215; Vol. IV, pp. 82, 119, 124, 144. Cf. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, pp. 102, 145, 150, 218–19; S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, Vol. II (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1971), p. 174; Rosenthal, 'Child psychology in Islam', p. 1.
14. The question of the original nature of the child, for example, is raised in *Kitāb ri'yādat al-nafs* in connection with the training of the Ṣūfī novice [*Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 106, see also al-Ghazālī, *Mizān al-'amal* (Cairo, 1973), p. 72] and in *Kitāb al-tawba (Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, pp. 3, 4, 16, 20) in connection with the question of repentance. A description of the development of the child is to be found in *Kitāb al-tawhīd wa-al-tawakkul (Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, pp. 324, 325, 339); brief references to the psychological development of the child, his original nature, children's games and

ways of education are included in *Kitāb sharḥ 'ajā'ib al-qalb* (*Ihyā'*, Vol. III, pp. 11, 17, 21, 36, 45), *Kitāb dhamm al-ghurūr* (*Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 508), *Kitāb al-sabr wa-al-shukr* (*Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, p. 79), *Kitāb al-fagr wa-al-zuhd* (*Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, pp. 268, 282), *Kitāb al-amr bi-al-mā'rūf* (*Ihyā'*, Vol. II, p. 431), and in *Mizān al-'amal* (pp. 31, 49, 72, 121, 156).

15. See, for example, al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, pp. 32, 282; al-Ghazālī, *Mizān al-'amal*, pp. 15, 16.
16. On children in *ḥadīth* and *adab* literature see Introduction above.
17. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. I, pp. 128–9.
18. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. II, pp. 275–9.
19. Al-Ghazālī is not the only Muslim scholar to denounce this popular tendency to give preference to male children. See below, Chapter 8.
20. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. II, pp. 67–70, and see above, Chapter 3.
21. In some branches of the Islamic religious literature, such as *ḥadīth*, religious law and ethics, issues of childrearing are frequently raised as part of or in connection with a discussion of marital matters. See, for instance, Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yahḍuruhu al-faqīh*, Vol. III, pp. 274–7, 304–19; Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī*, Vol. IX, pp. 299–313; al-Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhḥlāq*, pp. 173–81; Ibn 'Arḍūn, 'Le traité du mariage et de l'éducation', translated by P. Paquignon, *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 15(1911), esp. pp. 47–59.

On similar attitudes towards marriage in Judaism and Christianity see D.M. Feldman, *Marital Relations, Birth Control and Abortion in Jewish Law* (New York, 1974), pp. 21–59; Alexandre-Bidon and Closson, *L'Enfant à l'ombre des cathédrales*, pp. 16–19.

22. A teleological concept is indicated here: things are created for a particular end, and they must be exploited for the sake of realising this end. See G.F. Hourani, 'Ghazālī on the ethics of action', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 96(1976), pp. 69–87, esp. p. 79.
23. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. II, p. 31; M. Farah, *Marriage and Sexuality in Islam: A Translation of al-Ghazālī's Book on the Etiquette of Marriage from the Ihyā'* (Salt Lake City, 1984), pp. 53–4. See also Motzki, 'Das Kind', pp. 403–4.
24. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Mu'allafāt al-Ghazālī* (Kuwait 1977), p. 279.
25. (MS. Hāmidīyya Library, Istanbul) 1459, fols 62–6. I wish to thank Professor Joseph Sadan for drawing my attention to this manuscript.
26. (MS. La Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), Ar. 6882, fol. 160.
27. According to the Aristotelian system of the classification of sciences, which was adopted albeit with some changes by Muslim philosophers and theologians, all sciences are classified into 'Theoretical', 'Practical' and 'Poetical'. The 'Theoretical Sciences' include physics, mathematics and metaphysics, and the 'Practical Sciences' comprise ethics, economics and politics. For a full description of the system see Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Miskawayh, *Kitāb al-Sa'āda* (Cairo, 1928), pp. 49ff. See also L. Gardet and M. Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane* (Paris, 1948), p. 97; H.A. Wolfson, 'The classification of sciences in medieval Jewish philosophy' in *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion* (Harvard, 1973), pp. 395–493. On the assimilation of the Aristotelian system into Islamic thought see, for instance, D. Gutas, 'Paul

the Persian on the classification of the parts of Aristotle's philosophy: a milestone between Alexandria and Baghdad,' *Der Islam* 60(1983), pp. 231–67; A. Gil'adi, 'On the origin of two key-terms in al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*,' *Arabica* 36(1989), pp. 81–92.

28. Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, pp. 46–54: '*Fī ta'dīb al-aḥdāth wa-al-ṣibyān khāṣar*^m' ['On the Education of the Young, especially of Children'].
29. Plessner, *Der Oikonomikoc*, Arabic text, pp. 182–204. In his treatise Bryson treats four subjects, all in the sphere of domestic management by the householder, namely, one's attitude to one's wife, rearing and educating the children, supervision of the slaves and managing the property. Hardly anything is known about the Neo-Pythagoreans in general or Bryson in particular. See R. Walzer, *Greek into Arabic* (Oxford, 1962), p. 220. On the interest of the Pythagoreans and the Neo-Pythagoreans in problems of education see F. Rosenthal, 'Some Pythagorean documents transmitted in Arabic,' *Orientalia* 10(1941), pp. 385, 386.

Bryson's book was translated into Arabic under the title *Tadbīr al-raḥul li-manzilihi* by a translator whose identity is unknown. On the composition, its translation into Arabic and its influence on Muslim thinkers, particularly Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Miskawayh and al-Ghazālī, see Plessner, *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 29, 39–52, 131–5, 139; Motzki, 'Das Kind', pp. 430–1.

30. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, p. XXIV (on the meaning of the Greek *paidela*); F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* (Leiden, 1970), p. 284.
31. D.B. Macdonald, 'The moral education of the young among the Muslims', *International Journal of Ethics* 15(1905), p. 290.
32. I. Goldziher, 'Ḥadīth and Sunna' in *Muslim Studies*, Vol. II (London, 1971), pp. 29–31.
33. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, pp. 64–7.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 68–71.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 71: the Prophet is presented as the only man who achieved perfect balance of the four forces of the spirit; interpretation of verse 15 of Sūra 49 as expressing the idea of balance; pp. 73, 74: the interpretation of Qur'ān 3:134, 25:67, 7:31, and 48:29 as expressing the same idea; quotation of the *fiṭra* report (see below) with the addition of the term *mu'tadil* (balanced); p. 82: an interesting interpretation of the expression *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm* ['the way of the uprightness'] (Qur'ān 1:6) according to which the *ṣirāṭ* is no other than the way of him who preserves the balance of the spiritual forces. To protect this balance every Muslim is obliged to request from God seventeen times a day, in his prayer, *Ihdinā al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm* ['Lead us on the way of uprightness']. See also al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p.210; *Mizān*, pp. 54–5.
36. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 92. On the importance of moral education at a tender age and on the moral and religious responsibility of the father, cf. the sermon of John Chrysostom delivered in Antioch in 388 ('An address on vainglory and the right way of parents to bring up their children') referred to in Lyman, 'Barbarism and religion', p. 87. On the recognition of the central importance of educating children, especially at a very early age, as a stage in the development of the concept

of the child in Europe in the seventeenth century, see Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, pp. 111–24.

37. Al-Ghazālī generally appears to suggest that man by his very nature tends to moral perfection, and that this tendency, namely the *fiṭra*, may be achieved in certain conditions but is liable to be frustrated in other conditions. See, for example, al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 76, Vol. IV, p. 16. The term *fiṭra* is mentioned in the Qur'ān (30:30) in the sense of the 'creation of God', 'Allāh's way of creating'. See *ET*², Vol. II, pp. 931–2 (s.v. 'Fiṭra'). The term became especially widespread by virtue of the following *ḥadīth* report: *Kull mawlūdⁿ yūladu 'alā al-fiṭra fa-abawāhu yuhawwidānihi aw yunnaṣirānihi aw yumajjīsānihi* ['Every infant is born according to the *fiṭra* (Allāh's kind or way of creating) then his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian']. See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. I, p. 348.
38. On the significance religion puts on children see al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. II, p. 31, Vol. IV, p. 130. In contrast, see statements on children as factors deflecting the believer from serving God (with quotation of Qur'ān 63:9) and to committing transgressions: al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 324, Vol. IV, p. 87. A similar motif, namely, children and property as a symbol of life in this world is found in the Qur'ān, for instance, 8:28, 18:46, 34:37, 57:20, 64:15.
39. All the instructions in the chapter are directed to the father. Reference to both parents is rare, and the mother alone is mentioned only once in connection with the educational role of the father: she must ensure the child's obedience to his father thus preventing his misconduct (al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 93). On the mother as an emotional being who lacks understanding of the real needs of the child (for example, when painful medical treatment is necessary she 'protects' the child from it) as compared with the rational father, see al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, p. 124 (in the context of a simile). But al-Ghazālī also cites *ḥadīth* reports exalting the loving kindness of the mother: *Ihyā'*, Vol. II, p. 276.
A discussion on the education of daughters is rare in Islamic writings on education in general. See A.S. Tritton, *Materials on Muslim Education in the Middle Ages* (London, 1957), p. 140; *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V, pp. 204–5 (s.v. 'Education [Muslim]'). In al-Ghazālī's chapter the subject is not considered at all.
40. 'O ye who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire whereof the fuel is men and stones...'
41. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 95. See note 37 above.
42. See, for instance, al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, pp. 77–8.
43. See Chapter 2 above. On the father's having the task of choosing a wet-nurse (in the same way as the overall responsibility for rearing and educating children is the father's) see, for instance, Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī*, Vol. IX, p. 312; Abū al-Qāsim al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl* (Calcutta, 1276/1859–60), Vol. I, pp. 157–8 (Commentary on Qur'ān 2:233).
44. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 92. Cf. Friedl, 'Parents and children', p. 202. On the basis of her anthropological research in the village Boir/Aḥmad in southwest Iran in the years 1965–1975, Friedl states that the

moral development of an infant is regarded as influenced mainly by the purity of the mother's milk thought to reflect the mother's moral purity.

45. See Chapter 2 above. The Arab-Islamic concept of the link between suckling and character traits of the child is well expressed by Abū al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī in *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* (MS. La Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), Ar. 2447, fol. 108: '*Fa-inna al-laban huwa alladhī yughadhdhī al-ṭifl... wa-yufidu al-mizāj alladhī yūjibu ikhtilāf al-gharā'iz wa-al-akhlāq. Wa-qāla al-nabiyyu ṣal'am: "la yurḍi lakum al-ḥamqā fa-inna al-laban yufsidu al-nasab."*'
46. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, Vol. III, pp. 93, 94.
47. Ibid., p. 94. Cf. 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāhiz, *Kitāb al-mu'allimīn* (ed. I. Kh. Geries) (Tel-Aviv, 1980), p. 86.
48. Al-Ghazālī, *ibid*; id., *al-Munqidh*, pp. 110–11. On *tamyīz* as the translation of axiomatic knowledge from theory into practice see al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, Vol. I, p. 118. A lower degree of *tamyīz* is that of beasts that are also able to make basic distinctions. See *Iḥyā'*, Vol. I, p. 366 and see Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazālī*, pp. 297–8. See also Chapter 2 above.
49. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, Vol. III, pp. 22, 92.
Al-Ghazālī (*Mizān al-'amal*, p. 31; *Iḥyā'*, Vol. III, p. 11) differentiates between three degrees of intellectual development: (a) at birth, the child possesses the potential ability to know (see also *Iḥyā'*, Vol. I, p. 120); (b) at the 'age of discernment' he exhibits the ability to grasp axiomatic facts which brings him closer to knowing in practice; (c) at the stage of 'acquisition' there matures the ability to know by experience, thought, study and occasionally by revelation. Cf. Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Risālat al-'aql* M. Bouyges (ed.) (Beirut, 1938), p. 12.
50. Al-Ghazālī, *Mizān al-'amal*, p. 87. Cf. Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, p. 47.
51. Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, p. 110. Galen, (*Kitāb al-akhlāq*, p. 29) places the age of shame earlier, at three years. Bryson goes even further in his contention that shame is sometimes a quality present from birth (Plessner, *Oikonomikoc*, pp. 184, 186).
52. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, Vol. III, pp. 22, 72, 92; id., *al-Munqidh*, p. 110; id., *Mishkāt al-anwār*, Abū al-'Alā al-'Afīfī (ed.), (Cairo, 1383/1964), pp. 76, 77. On the age of seven as marking the transition from the first to the second period of childhood, see al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, pp. 218, 219, and see Motzki, 'Das Kind', pp. 421–3.
53. Al-Ghazālī, *Mizān al-'amal*, p. 92 and cf. A.L. Tibawi, 'Some educational terms in *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-ṣafā'*,' in *Arabic and Islamic Themes* (London, 1976), p. 181.
54. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, Vol. II, p. 276, Vol. III, pp. 92–3.
55. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, Vol. III, p. 94; Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan*, *Kitāb al-ṣalāt*, bāb 26: '*Murū awlādakum bi-al-ṣalāt wa-hum abnā' sab'a sinīna wa-aḍribūhum 'alayhā.*' On fasting by children in the '*āshūrā*' see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-sawm*, bāb 47. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuḥfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 178–9. See also Motzki, 'Das Kind', pp. 421–3 and cf. Marou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, pp. 102, 142–3; Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*,

- p. 64. On the age of six as that for starting the religious education of children in traditional Muslim society today see, for instance, R. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran* (Harmondsworth, 1987), pp. 30–1.
56. Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā min 'ilm al-uṣūl* (Bulaq, 1322/1904–5), p. 84; id., *Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, p. 82.
 57. Abū al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī, *Adab al-dunyā wa-al-dīn* (Cairo, 1973), p. 57; Yūsuf Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa-faḍlihi* (Cairo, 1346/1927–8), Vol. I, p. 81.
 58. Al-Māwardī, *ibid.*
 59. *Ibid.*
 60. Al-Ghazālī, *Mizān al-'amal*, p. 49.
 61. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. I, p. 128, Vol. III, p. 94.
 62. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 218 and see also Vol. III, p. 20.
 63. Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Iljām al-'awāmm 'an 'ilm al-kalām* (Cairo, 1351/1932–3), pp. 55–6.
 64. *ET*², Vol. V, pp. 567–70 (s.v. 'Kuttāb').
 65. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'* Vol. III, pp. 93, 94. Instructions on child education according to al-Ghazālī's guiding principles are given by Abū Zakariyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 1277) in his book *al-Majmū' – sharḥ al-muhadhdhab* (Cairo, n.d.), p. 26), albeit attributed to al-Shāfi'ī.
 66. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. I, pp. 128–9.
 67. Al-Qābisi, *al-Risāla al-mufaṣṣila*, p. 291. See also al-Māwardī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, fol. 108.
 68. W.M. Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān* (Edinburgh, 1970), pp. 47–50. On the religious significance of memorising the Qur'ān see W.C. Smith, 'Some similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam: an essay in comparative religion', in J. Kritzeck and R. Bayly Winder (eds), *The World of Islam: Studies in Honour of P.K. Hitti* (London, 1960), p. 57.
 69. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, part III, pp. 260–4.
 70. M. Smith, *Al-Ghazali the Mystic* (London, 1944), p. 64.
 71. Ibn Khaldūn, *ibid.*, p. 263.
 72. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* (translated by F. Rosenthal), Vol. III, p. 303, note 1184. For an English translation of the passage in *Nawādir al-falāsifa* presenting the Greek curriculum see F. Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 72–3.
 73. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V, p. 200 (s.v. 'Education [Muslim]'). See also al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā*, p. 220.
 74. Al-Qābisi, *al-Risāla al-mufaṣṣila*, pp. 304–5. Al-Qābisi distinguishes between 'obligatory studies', namely, Qur'ān, auxiliary subjects (such as writing and language), and the rules of purity and prayer on the one hand and 'optional studies' such as poetry and arithmetic on the other. See also al-Qurashī, *Aḥkām al-ḥisba*, p. 170; al-Māwardī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, fols 108–9 (instructions for elementary education of the sons of rulers) and cf. S.D. Goitein, *Jewish Education in Muslim Countries based on Records from the Cairo Geniza* (Jerusalem, 1962) (Hebrew), pp. 41–4, 57. Note especially the distinction (on p. 42) between 'study of writing as a means of acquiring reading, and the study of writing for its own sake (in

medieval Jewish elementary education in the Middle East). Every child learned how to write or, rather, how to draw the letters in order to grasp them precisely.... Only at a later age did certain children – those intending to become students of religion, teachers, scribes or merchants – learn writing proper.' This distinction probably holds also in respect of teaching writing in elementary Islamic education in the Middle Ages.

75. Al-Ghazālī's opinion about the legitimacy of studying arithmetic is expressed in the examples he presents from this sphere of teaching in *al-Qustās al-mustaqīm* (Cairo, n.d.), pp. 66, 82.
76. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. I, p. 58.
77. Ibid.
78. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 72.
79. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 93. Cf. Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, pp. 46–7.
80. Al-Ghazālī, *ibid.* (instructions on inculcating table manners). Cf. *Waṣīyyat Aflātūn fī ta'dīb al-aḥdāth*, p. 55. Some similar instructions on eating habits are found in *Ihyā'*, Vol. II, pp. 6–8 (within the first *bāb* of *Kitāb ādāb al-akl*). As a rule, these instructions are detailed and based particularly on the custom of the Prophet whereas in the chapter on child education al-Ghazālī's guidelines are mostly drawn from philosophical literature (see, for example, Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, pp. 49–50; Plessner, *Oikonomikoc*, pp. 186–8). A few instructions only are interjected in the spirit of *Kitāb ādāb al-akl*, such as the rule of taking food in the right hand and of reciting *bi-ismi Allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm* ['In the name of Allāh the Beneficent, the Merciful'].
81. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, pp. 93–4. Cf. Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, pp. 48–52; Plessner, *Oikonomikoc*, pp. 188–200. For similar instructions on table manners, sleeping and relationships with others see *Waṣīyyat Aflātūn*, pp. 56–8. See also Motzki, 'Das Kind,' pp. 427–9, 433–5.
82. Al-Ghazālī, *ibid.*, p. 93.
83. Plessner, *Oikonomikoc*, pp. 188, 194; Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, p. 51, and see *Waṣīyyat Aflātūn*, p. 58.
84. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V, p. 200 (s.v. 'Education [Muslim]'); Burhān al-Dīn al-Zarnūjī, *Ta'lim al-muta'allim tariq al-ta'allum: Instruction of the Student, the Method of Learning* (translated by G. von Grunebaum and T. Abel) (New York, 1947), p. 16. At the same time, Hellenistic and Persian ideas on physical education were infiltrating into Islamic sources. See above.
85. Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, p. 52; Plessner, *Oikonomikoc*, p. 202.
86. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 94.
87. Al-Ghazālī, *Mizān al-'amal*, pp. 88–9.
88. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 325.
89. Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 161–2.
90. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 69, Vol. III, p. 79; al-Ghazālī, *Mizān al-'amal*, pp. 15–16, 160. But in contrast see *Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, p. 100 – on the custom of simultaneously imposing studies upon the child and banning him from playing games. On the important place of games in the daily life of the young child, see Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn*, p. 157.
91. See Rosenthal, 'Child psychology in Islam', p. 3.

92. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyāʾ*, Vol. IV, pp. 32, 282; Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Jawāhir al-Qurʾān* (Cairo, n.d.), pp. 49, 50.
93. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyāʾ*, Vol. IV, p. 122.
94. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyāʾ*, Vol. II, p. 432, Vol. III, pp. 41, 42. On the custom of playing with birds, see Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, Vol. III/2, p. 65.
95. See note 93 above.
96. Al-Qurashī, *Aḥkām al-ḥisba*, pp. 32–8, 171. On children's games in the 'Abbāsid period according to the *adab* literature see Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids*, pp. 272–4.

5: Corporal Punishment in Medieval Islamic Educational Thought

1. De Mause, 'The evolution of childhood', p. 40; J.S. Brubacher, *A History of the Problems of Education* (New York and London, 1947), pp. 168–70.
2. De Mause, *ibid.*, p. 41.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 41–2.
5. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, pp. 158–9.
On the use of physical punishment in Byzantine education see I.G. Lecomte, 'L'enseignement primaire à Byzance et le Kuttāb', *Arabica* 1(1954), pp. 328–9.
6. Marrou, *ibid.*, pp. 102, 146.
7. S.D. Goitein, 'Jewish Education in Yemen', *Megamot* 2(1951) (Hebrew), pp. 154–5, Cf. H. Ammar, *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village*, pp. 125, 141. On physical punishment in European education in the Middle Ages see De Mause, 'The Evolution of Childhood', p. 42; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and Surrogates', p. 108.
8. P. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, pp. 250–1.
9. See, for instance, Ammar, *ibid.*, pp. 128, 137. See also Friedl, 'Parents and Children in a Village in Iran' p. 204.
10. See also below, Chapter 6.
11. Al-Qurashī, *Maʿālim al-qurba fī aḥkām al-ḥisba*, p. 171. On cruel beatings of children by parents and teachers with, among other things, a stick and a whip, see, for instance, *Fatāwā Qādī Khān*, Vol. II, pp. 315–16. See also al-Ghazālī, *Ihyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, Vol. IV, p. 192. On the *falaqa*, an appliance used for tying together the feet of pupils before beating them, see Lecomte, 'L'enseignement primaire', p. 329; *EF*, Vol. II, pp. 763, 764 (s.v. 'Falaqa').
12. *EF*, Vol. IV, p. 341 (s.v. 'al-Kābisī'), and see Introduction above.
13. Al-Qābisī, *al-Risāla al-mufaṣṣila*, p. 345. See also p. 323.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 342–4. Evidence of corporal punishment in the *kuttāb* is to be found scattered among much of the medieval Islamic writing, for instance, 'Alī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba fī maʾrifat al-ṣaḥāba* (Cairo, 1280/1863–4), Vol. III, p. 50, Vol. IV, p. 234, Vol. V, p. 553; Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-maḥāsīn wa-al-masāwī*, (ed. F. Schwally, (Giessen, 1902), pp. 620, 621; Yāqūt b. Abdallāh al-Ḥamawī, *Irshād al-arīb fī maʾrifat al-adīb*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, (London and Leiden, 1907–13), Vol. I, p. 223. On the corporal punishment of children that terminated in their death see, for instance, al-Ghazālī, *Ihyāʾ*, Vol. IV, p. 195.

15. See, for instance, al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, p. 162, approval of corporal punishment as an educational means. Just as the believer will ultimately thank God for putting him to the test, so will the child, when he gets older, thank his teacher and his father for beating him and educating him because, in his maturity, he will be capable of discerning the fruits of such an education. See also *ibid.*, p. 192 on the whip, the rod and harsh words as educational devices.
16. The child and the beast are both controlled by faculties of the animal soul. See M.A. Sherif, *Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue* (Albany, 1975), pp. 24–8.
17. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, p. 194.
18. See above, Chapter 4.
19. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. IV, pp. 54, 339–40, 545. See also al-Qābisī, *al-Risāla al-mufaṣṣila*, p. 313.
20. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 94. See also Plessner, *Oikonomikoc*, p. 200; Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, p. 52.
21. The authority of the father and the adult in general, which the child must accept out of fear and obedience, is a theme that is emphasised in the chapter on child education in *Kitāb riḡāḡat al-naḡs*. Cf. Ammar, *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village*, p. 133.
22. Cf. John Chrysostom in the sermon he delivered in Antioch in the year 388 ('An Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up Their Children'): 'The child should not be beaten too much with rod or blows, lest he come to disregard or despise them. Rather threats and promises are more effective'. Quoted in Lyman, 'Barbarism and Religion', p. 87.
23. Bryson (see Plessner, *Oikonomikoc*, p. 186), on the one hand, deals with the child whom it is hard to educate ('shameless') and suggests reacting to his behaviour by inspiring fear and by threats (and according to one manuscript by beating as well). On the other hand, he suggests responding to the acts of the educable child with words of blame or praise, without the threat of physical punishment.
24. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. III, p. 93; Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, p. 49. See also al-Qābisī, *al-Risāla al-mufaṣṣila*, p. 313.
25. Cf. *Waṣiyyat Aḡlaṡūn ḡi ta'dīb al-aḡḡāṡh*, pp. 55, 56 (there it is suggested that the undisciplined child be isolated from the other children); Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-siyāsa*, pp. 1073–4. Ibn Sīnā suggests proceeding to physical punishment after exhausting the other educational means such as fear, incentive, praise and censure. The use of bodily chastisement should be considerate and balanced: 'It is better for the first blow to be a little painful... for, if the first blow hurts, the child will fear those that are to follow but, if it is light and does not hurt, the child will be unconcerned about what he may expect and will ignore it.'
26. Al-Ghazālī devoted a special section to this matter in his instructions to the teacher and defined the method of reacting to behaviour of the pupil as 'one of the fine points of the teaching profession'. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Vol. I, p. 81. See also Motzki, 'Das Kind', pp. 437–8.
27. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddima*, English translation, Vol. III, p. 305. Cf. Ammar, *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village*, pp. 138–9.

28. Ibn Khaldūn, *ibid.* On criticism of corporal punishment in medieval Europe see McLaughlin, 'Survivors and Surrogates', p. 131.
29. De Mause, *The History of Childhood*, Foreword, p. 10: 'It seems clear that the history of childhood must be of major importance to any study of human society for if, as it is said, the child is father to the man, it should be possible with an understanding of any individual's or any group's past, to form a more intelligent judgment of their performance as adults.'

On the connection between the methods of punishment of children in the Egyptian village of Silwa and the qualities of adults who were educated in the same village, Ammar (*Growing Up in an Egyptian Village*, p. 139) states: 'It does not require any emphasis here to point out that the effects of these techniques of fear as forcing children to resort to lies and deception, are reflected later in the prevailing atmosphere of adult life which is charged with suspicion, secrecy and apprehension...'

30. Ibn Khaldūn, *ibid.*, p. 306.

6: Infants, Children and Death in Medieval Muslim Society

1. Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine*, p. 57; Demaitre, 'The idea of childhood', p. 465; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', pp. 111, 112, 119; Wilson, 'The myth of motherhood', p. 186; Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, pp. 220–1; D.L. Ransel, *Mothers of Misery: Child Abandonment in Russia* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 266–74; Kottek, 'Childhood in medieval Jewry', pp. 378–9.
2. McLaughlin, *ibid.*, p. 145 (note 37).
3. Analogy in general terms between the situation in developing countries today, where most of the fifteen million infants and children who die each year are born [see: J.P. Grant, *The State of the World's Children 1986*, UNICEF (Oxford, 1985), p. 130] and the situation in past societies, for which we have very little demographic data, particularly those concerning children, can be illustrative. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that many of the conditions causing child mortality in these areas were much worse in pre-modern times as problems were aggravated by scanty medical knowledge and poor facilities as well as by ignorance and poverty.
4. Grant, *ibid.*, pp. 123–4.
5. Shahar, 'Infants, infant care and attitudes toward infancy', pp. 285–91; Ransel, *ibid.*, pp. 45–6, and see below.
6. Al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-al-atfāl*, p. 209.
7. Demaitre, *ibid.*, p. 466.
8. See, for instance, Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, Vol. III, p. 233.
9. Grant, *ibid.*
10. M. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977), pp. 178, 181, 186; *id.*, 'Al-Manbijī's "report of the plague": A treatise on the plague of 764–65/1362–64 in the Middle East' in D. Williman (ed.), *The Black Death: The Impact of the Fourteenth-Century Plague* (New York, 1982), p. 67.
11. Hanawalt, 'Child-rearing among the lower classes', p. 22.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

13. D. Hunt, *Parents and Children in History*, pp. 11–26.
14. Hanawalt, *ibid.*, p. 15.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.
17. Shahar, 'Infants, infant care and attitudes toward infancy', p. 293.
18. DeMause, 'The evolution of childhood', pp. 36, 37, 40, 43; Shahar, *ibid.*, p. 295; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', p. 108; Ransel, *Mothers of Misery*, pp. 266–74.
19. See, for instance, A. Cameron, 'The exposure of children and Greek ethics', *The Classical Review* 46(1932), pp. 106–7, 108; W.V. Harris, 'The theoretical possibility of extensive infanticide in the Graeco-Roman world', *Classical Quarterly* 32(1982), p. 114; M. Radin, 'The exposure of infants in Roman law and practice', *Classical Journal* 20(1925), pp. 341–3; E. Eyben, 'Family planning in Graeco-Roman antiquity', *Ancient Society* 11/12(1980–1), pp. 5–82, esp. 17–19, 22–43, 48–56; McLaughlin, *ibid.*, pp. 121–3; DeMause, *ibid.*, pp. 32–5; Wilson, 'The myth of motherhood', pp. 196–7; Ransel, *Mothers of Misery*, pp. 8, 19, 22, 29–30, 62–76, 130–75 (on child abandonment and infanticide in early modern Russia).
20. J.E. Boswell, '*Expositio* and *Oblatio*: The abandonment of children and the ancient and medieval family', *The American Historical Review* 89(1984), pp. 12, 13, 19, 21. See also: McLaughlin, *ibid.*, p. 121.
21. DeMause, *ibid.*, pp. 34–5; Shahar, *ibid.*, p. 288.
22. Shahar, *ibid.*, pp. 285, 288, 290.
23. For more details see below, Chapter 8.
24. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 37.
25. Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 183; Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, p. 26; Ransel, *ibid.*, pp. 271–4.
26. Pollock, *ibid.*, p. 1, and see also p. 24.
27. For a summary of the various arguments raised by historians of childhood concerning Ariès's thesis, see: Pollock, *ibid.*, pp. 1–32.
28. Wilson, 'The myth of motherhood', p. 182; A. Wilson, 'The infancy of the History of Childhood: An appraisal of Philippe Ariès', *History and Theory* 19(1980), pp. 132–53.
29. Wilson, 'The myth of motherhood', pp. 187, 188. See also: Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, pp. 34–43.
30. Wilson, *ibid.*, pp. 188–9.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 188, 189, 192, 193. See also: Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, pp. 210–13; Pollock, *ibid.*, pp. 51–2.
32. Cameron, 'The exposure of children', pp. 105, 107.
33. Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 196. See also: Boswell, '*Expositio* and *Oblatio*', pp. 12, 13.
34. Wilson, *ibid.*, pp. 187–8.
35. Demaitre, 'The idea of childhood', p. 478.
36. Dols, *The Black Death*, p. 301.
37. See above, and Grant, *The State of the World's Children*, p. 140, Table 5: The rate of infant mortality (that is, children under the age of one year old) in Iran in 1983 was 115 per 1000 live births (11.5 per cent). In the same year 17 per cent of Iranian children aged one to four died. The rates of infant mortality in other Middle Eastern countries in 1983 were

as follows: Egypt – 10 per cent; Iraq – 7.5 per cent; Saudi Arabia – 6.5 per cent; Syria – 6 per cent, and Jordan – 5.5 per cent (compared with 1 per cent in the United Kingdom and 0.6 per cent in Japan). Following are the rates of child mortality in the same year: Egypt – 15 per cent; Iraq – 10.5 per cent; Saudi Arabia – 9 per cent; Syria – 8 per cent, and Jordan – 7 per cent (compared with 1.2 per cent in the United Kingdom, and 0.9 per cent in Japan). It should be emphasised that these figures reflect the general situation in the countries mentioned without taking into account social and regional differences within each country. See also Friedl, 'Parents and children', pp. 201, 203; Atiya, *Khul-Khaal*, pp. 1, 3, 5.

38. Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine*, p. 1.
39. Dols, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, p. 57.
40. Abū al-Faraj 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb laftat al-kibad fī naṣīhat al-walad* in Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Faqī (ed.), *Min dafā'in al-kunūz* (Cairo, 1349/1930–31), p. 78.
41. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Taḥadduth bi-nīmat Allāh* (ed. E.M. Sartain) (Cambridge, 1975), p. 10.
42. See G. Gharīb, *Ibn al-Rūmī* (Beirut, 1968), p. 9; 'Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubāta al-Miṣrī* (Cairo, 1963), p. 116 (my thanks are due to my former students Mr 'Alī Hībī and Mr Khālīd Sindāwī for drawing my attention to these references); *The Muḥaddalīyāt: An Anthology of Ancient Arabian Odes* (ed. Ch. J. Lyall) (Oxford, 1918–20), Vol. II, p. 355 (on the background against which the famous elegy of Abū Dhu'ayb was written, namely, the death of his five young sons in one outbreak of plague, apparently in the year 18/638–9). On this elegy see J.A. Bellamy, 'Some observations on the Arabic *rithā'* in the Jāhiliya and Islam', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13(1990), p. 56.
43. M. Dols, 'The second plague pandemic and its recurrences in the Middle East 1347–1894', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 22(1979), pp. 162–89, esp. pp. 168–9.
44. Id., *The Black Death*, p. 178, and see also pp. 181, 186.
45. Al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, pp. 3–4. See also Dols, 'Al-Manbijī's "report of the plague"', p. 67.
46. See L.I. Conrad, 'Arabic plague chronologies and treatises: social and historical factors in the formation of a literary genre', *Studia Islamica* 54(1981), pp. 73, 74.
47. Al-Qaysī, *Bard al-akbād*, fol. 177a.
48. Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Sulwat al-ḥazīn*, fol. 10b. According to Ibn Abī Ḥajala, this tragic event occurred against the background of the plague called *al-tā'ūn al-jārif* in 688–9, eight years after the death of 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir. It seems therefore that the author was referring to 'Ubaydallāh b. Ma'mar, the governor of Baṣra at the time of the outbreak of plague. See: Conrad, *ibid.*, p. 55.
49. Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *ibid.*, fol. 20a, and Conrad, *ibid.*, p. 82. The figures mentioned by Ibn Abī Ḥajala are not necessarily accurate. It is likely that at least 'forty' is a *topos* for 'many'. Eighty-three also may be metaphorical or perhaps it means 'Eighty-three kinsmen'. See L.I. Conrad, 'Abraha and Muḥammad: Some observations apropos of chro-

- nology and literary *topoi* in the early Arabic historical tradition', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 50(1987) pp. 230–7.
50. Ibn Abi Ḥajala, *ibid.*, fol. 16a.
 51. Dols, *The Black Death*, p. 178. See also Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī's *fatwā*, mentioned in the Introduction above, which was issued (in the sixteenth century) against a background of high rates of child mortality caused by the plague.
 52. Hanawalt, 'Child-rearing among the lower classes', pp. 10–18.
 53. As mentioned above, a systematic survey of *fatāwā* and *sijillāt* can bear fruit in this respect; and anthropological research can also contribute, by way of analogy, to the understanding of historical phenomena. Thus Friedl, in her 'Parents and children in a village in Iran', shows (p. 205) that girls 'more protected and nourished a little better than boys... are less likely to meet accidents and to fall sick'.
 54. Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥājj al-'Abdarī, *al-Madkhal* (Beirut, 1972), Vol. III, pp. 298–9.
 55. *Ibid.*, pp. 304–5. Cf. McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', pp. 112, 114.
 56. Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *al-Fatāwā al-fiqhiyya al-kubrā* (Cairo, 1890), Vol. IV, p. 220.
 57. Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, Vol. IV, p. 119.
 58. See, for example, al-Baladī, *Tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-al-atfāl*, p. 203.
 59. See above, Chapter 3.
 60. *Fatāwā Qāḍī Khān*, Vol. IV, p. 441.
 61. Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Madā'inī (d. 842), *Kitāb al-ta'āzī*, (ed. Ibtisām Marhūn al-Ṣaffār and Badrī Muḥammad Fahd (Najaf, 1971), p. 45; 'Abd al-Raḥmān Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb aḥkām al-nisā'* (Beirut, 1981), p. 388.
 62. *Fatāwā Qāḍī Khān*, Vol. IV, pp. 441–2.
 63. Ibn Abi Ḥajala, *Sulwat al-ḥazīn*, fols 12a–12b; al-Madā'inī, *Kitāb al-ta'āzī*, pp. 44–5.
 64. Abū Zakariyā Yahyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 1277), *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn* (Batavia, 1882–4), Vol. III, pp. 169–70; *Fatāwā Qāḍī Khān*, Vol. IV, p. 441.
 65. *Fatāwā Qāḍī Khān*, *ibid.*; al-Nawawī, *ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 171.
 66. On careless treatment during childbirth, see above.
 67. *Fatāwā Qāḍī Khān*, Vol. IV, pp. 441–2.
 68. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Aḥkām al-nisā'*, p. 388.
 69. Abū Ḥamid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīhat al-mulūk* (Cairo, 1317/1899–1900), p. 56; Qāḍī Khān, *Fatāwā*, Vol. II, pp. 315–16.
 70. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn 'Alī, *Kitāb al-khilāf fī al-fiqh* (Teheran, 1382/1962–3), Vol. II, p. 348; al-Nawawī, *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn*, Vol. III, p. 170.
 71. *Fatāwā Qāḍī Khān*, Vol. IV, p. 441.
 72. 'The right to the inheritance of the property left by an emancipated slave' (Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Supplement, Vol. VIII, p. 3061).
 73. Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwatta'* (Tunis, 1280/1863), p. 293 [English transla-

tion by 'Ā'isha 'Abdarḥmān al-Tarjumāna and Ya'qūb Johnson (Cambridge, 1982), p. 344].

74. Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, *Kitāb al-umm* (Bulaq, 1321/1903–4), part VI, p. 263, and cf. Boswell, 'Expositio and Oblatio', p. 27.

Jews in medieval Mediterranean society were also familiar with the problem of abandoned children. See, for instance, Moshe b. Maymon (Maimonides), *Mishne Torah: Sefer Qedushan* (New York and Berlin, 1926), Chapter 15 [English translation by L.I. Rabinowitz and P. Grossman, *The Code of Maimonides: The Book of Holiness* (New Haven and London, 1965), p. 104]:

If a child is found abandoned in the roadway, and a man comes forth and declares: 'This is my son, and I have abandoned him', he is to be believed; the same applies to the mother. If after the child is gathered up from the street his father and mother come forth and say: 'This is our child', they are not to be believed, since he is already known as a foundling. In years of famine, however, they are to be believed, since they may have abandoned him because of hunger and out of a desire that others should sustain him, and it may be for that reason that they remained silent until he was gathered up.

75. Al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū' sharḥ al-muhadhdhab* (Cairo, 1966), Vol. XIV, p. 536.
76. See above, and below, Chapter 8.
77. Al-Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūṭ*, Vol. II, p. 57.
78. Ibid., and see also: al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 115.
79. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 62–4.
80. Al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, pp. 112–17.
81. Ibid., p. 113. And see also Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī li-al-fatāwā* (Cairo, 1959), part II, p. 189.
82. Al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, p. 112.
83. Ibid., p. 113.
84. Ibid., 114.
85. Musallam, *Sex and Society in Islam*, pp. 57–9.
86. Al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, pp. 114–15. Apparently for that reason al-Ghazālī (*Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, Vol. II, pp. 68–9) recommends giving an aborted foetus a name.
87. Al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, p. 114.
88. Ibn Taghri Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira* (Popper's translation), Vol. XVIII, pp. 71–2 (cited in Dols, *The Black Death*, pp. 241–2).
89. Mūsā b. Muḥammad Quṭb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mir'āt al-zamān* (MS. Topkapi Sarayi), AHMET 2907/E3, fol. 222b. My thanks to Dr 'Amalia Levanoni for drawing my attention to this reference.
90. See Kh. Moaz and S. Ory, *Inscriptions arabes de Damas, Les stèles funéraires, I. Cimetière d'al-Bāb al-Sagīr* (Damascus, 1977) (out of 80 gravestones surveyed three were erected on tombs of youths but none on a child's); A. 'Abd al-Tawwāb and S. Ory, *Stèles Islamiques de la nécropole d'Assouan* (Cairo, 1977) (out of 400 gravestones surveyed not one is a child's).

91. Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Sulwat al-ḥazīn*, fol. 30a, and cf. Ammar, *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village*, p. 93.
92. See above.
93. J. Idleman-Smith and Y. Yazbeck-Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (Albany, 1981), p. 168; W.M. Watt, 'Suffering in Sunnite Islam', *Studia Islamica* 50 (1979), pp. 5–19.
 On these questions as dealt with in Christian theology, see, for instance, the fascinating literary description by James Joyce in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London, 1986), p. 213.
 On a theological discussion of children's death in medieval Jewish sources, see: S. Abramson, *Ba-Merkazim uba-tephusoth bi-tekuphath ha-geonim*, pp. 62–4.
94. Idleman-Smith and Yazbeck-Haddad, *ibid.*, pp. 179–80.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 168–71.
96. Al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 106; Idleman-Smith and Yazbeck-Haddad, *ibid.*, p. 169.
97. Al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, p. 107. The verses discussed are 38–42 in Sūra 74: 'Every soul is a pledge for its own deeds; save those who will stand on the right hand. In gardens they will ask one another concerning the guilty: "What hath brought you to this burning?"' [English translation: M. Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York and Toronto, n.d.)]. On the child's innocence as 'the symbol and model of perfect piety', especially among Muslim mystics, see: Rosenthal, 'Child psychology in Islam', p. 16.
98. Al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, p. 106–7, 108–10. See also above, Chapter 4.
99. al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, pp. 71, 93.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 111. See also Idleman-Smith and Yazbeck-Haddad, *ibid.*, p. 173.
101. See: al-Suyūṭī, *al-ḥāwī li-al-fatāwā*, part II, pp. 311–16. On the questioning in the grave by the interrogating angels, sometimes identified as Munkar wa-Nakir, see Idleman-Smith and Yazbeck-Haddad, *ibid.*, pp. 41–2.
102. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Kitāb al-rūḥ* (Cairo, 1957), p. 88, and see above, Chapter 4.
103. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*; al-Suyūṭī, *ibid.*, pp. 312, 313. See also Idleman-Smith and Yazbeck-Haddad, *ibid.*, p. 174.
104. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*,
105. Al-Suyūṭī, *ibid.*, pp. 313–14; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *al-Fatāwā al-fiqhiyya al-kubrā*, part II, p. 30.
Talqīn in this context sometimes means to prepare the dying believer by reciting to him the basic articles of faith. Sometimes, however, *talqīn* was practised after the believer had died but before his burial.
106. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*, p. 87. See also: Rosenthal, 'Child psychology in Islam', p. 15.
107. See above, Chapter 4.
108. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *ibid.*, p. 88.
109. Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'at fatāwā* (Cairo, 1326/1908–9), Vol. II, p. 178.
110. The Zaydiyya, one of the Shī'a's branches, arose from the revolt of Zayd

- b. 'Alī, against the Umayyads in 740. The Zaydis 'essentially retained the politically militant but religiously moderate attitude predominant in the early Kūfan Shī'a.' See: W. Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany, 1988), p. 86.
111. Al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *Majmū' min kutub al-Imām al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq* (MS. The British Library, London), Or. 3798, fol. 60a. See also Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* (ed. H. Ritter) (Leipzig and Istanbul, 1929–30), pp. 55, 201, 250, 254, and Rosenthal, *ibid.*, pp. 12–14.
 112. 'The name of the great theological school which created the speculative dogmatics of Islam'. See: *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 421 (s.v. 'al-Mu'tazila').
 113. 'The schismatic revolutionary movement arising out of the opposition in 'Alī's Kūfan army to his arbitration agreement with Mu'āwīya after the battle of Ṣiffin (657)'. See Madelung, *ibid.*, p. 54.
 114. Al-Ash'arī, *ibid.*, p. 89; Rosenthal, *ibid.*, p. 11.
 115. Al-Ash'arī, *ibid.*, p. 111; Rosenthal, *ibid.*, p. 12.
 116. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, Vol. IV, pp. 38–9.
 117. Ibn Taymiyya, *ibid.* For a similar theological dispute in Jewish circles in the tenth century (apparently under Islamic influence) see: Abramson, *Ba-merkazim uba-tefusoth*, pp. 62–4.
 118. See above, Introduction.
 119. Abū Isā al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Bulaq, 1292/1875–6), part II, p. 181 (*Kitāb al-tafsīr*, sūra 7); al-Qaysī, *Bard al-akbād*, fols. 169b–70a; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Iḥtifāl*, fols 5b–6a; al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 70.
 120. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. II, pp. 315–16, 347. See also al-Qaysī, *ibid.*, fol. 167a; al-Suyūṭī, *Faql al-jalad fī faql al-walad* (MS. The Library of the University of Leiden) Or. 474(30) fol. 249b; *id.*, *al-Iḥtifāl*, fols 5a, 5b, 6a; al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, pp. 67–73. See also versions with four children: *ibid.*, pp. 73–7; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Aḥkām al-nisā'*, p. 385.
 121. Ibn al-Jawzī, *ibid.*, p. 380; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Iḥtifāl*, fol. 6b.
 122. See, for example, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Abbās b. Jurayj Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān* (Cairo, 1973–9), Vol. I, p. 244, Vol. II, pp. 625, 626; Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubāta, *Dīwān* (Cairo, 1905), pp. 156, 218, 347, 348, 546; L. Cheikho, *Kitāb shu'arā' al-naṣrāniyya*, part I: '*Fī shu'arā' al-jāhiliyya*' (Beirut, 1920), pp. 271ff. (al-Ḥārith b. 'Ubad's elegy on his son Bujayr). This elegy is discussed by J.A. Bellamy in 'Some observations on the Arabic *rithā'*', p. 48.
 123. Al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 91.
 124. See, for instance, Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwattā'*, p. 79; Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī, *al-Masā'il al-manthūra – fatāwā al-Imām al-Nawawī* (Beirut, 1972), p. 58; Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Ikhtiyārāt al-fiqhiyya min fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya* (Beirut, n.d.), p. 90; al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, p. 115. Cf. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, Vol. V (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1988), pp. 173, 174.
 125. Al-Suyūṭī, *Faql al-jalad*, fol. 248b; al-Qaysī, *Bard al-akbād*, fol. 165b; al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, p. 87.
 126. Al-Qaysī, *ibid.*
 127. Al-Qaysī, *ibid.*, fol. 180b; al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, p. 88.

128. Al-Qaysi, *ibid.*, fol. 188b. See also al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. II, p. 328.
129. Al-Qaysi, *ibid.*, fols 188b–189a.
130. Al-Bukhārī, *ibid.*
131. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-adab*, *bāb* 109; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuḥfat al-mawdūd*, p. 64.
132. Al-Qaysi, *Bard al-akbād*, fol. 182b.
133. Al-Qaysi, *ibid.*, fol. 189a.
134. Al-Qaysi, *ibid.*, fol. 174a.
135. Al-Qaysi, *ibid.*, fol. 184a.
136. Al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 87.
137. Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine*, p. 73.
138. DeMause, 'The evolution of childhood', p. 17.
139. Al-Qaysi, *Bard al-akbād*, fol. 169a; al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 84.
140. Al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, p. 86.
141. Al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Abwāb al-birr*, *bāb* 11.
142. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-adab*, *bāb* 18, and see above, Chapter 4.
143. Al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 82.
144. Al-Qaysi, *Bard al-akbād*, fol. 171b.
145. See, for instance, Ammar, *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village*, Chapter IV, esp. p. 105; Friedl, 'Parents and children', p. 201.
146. See, for instance, Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*, pp. 90–2.
147. Ṭaha Ḥusayn, *An Egyptian Childhood* (translated by E.H. Paxton) (London and Washington, DC, 1981), Chapter 18. See also Atiya, *Khul-Khaal*, pp. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 26–7, 152–3.
148. See below, Chapter 7.
149. Al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 90; Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, pp. 210–11.
150. Al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, pp. 100–1.
151. Al-Qaysi, *Bard al-akbād*, fol. 166a.
152. See above and Chapter 8 below.
153. See above, Introduction.
154. For full details of the manuscript see above, Introduction.
155. Al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 78; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Iḥtiṣāl*, fol. 6a; al-Qaysi, *Bard al-akbād*, fol. 168b.
156. Al-Manbijī, *ibid.*, p. 89.
157. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
158. See above notes 120, 121 and also al-Qaysi, *Bard al-akbād*, fols. 166b–167b, 169b–170a; al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, pp. 78, 83, 86, 98, 99, 100, 106.
159. Al-Qaysi, *ibid.*, fols 168a, 168b.
160. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-janā'iz*, *bāb* 6.
161. Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Iḥtiṣāl*, fol. 7a.
162. See below, Chapter 8.

7: Ṣabr (Steadfastness) of Bereaved Parents: a Motif in Medieval Islamic Consolation Treatises and its Origins

1. Ibn Abi Ḥajala, *Sulwat al-hazin*, fol. 14b; al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, pp. 94–5; al-Qaysi, *Bard al-akbād*, fols. 174a–174b.

2. On Abū Ṭalḥa, one of the *anṣār*, the Madenese assistants of the Prophet, see Muḥammad Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, Vol. III/2 (ed. J. Horowitz) (Leiden, 1904), pp. 64–6. On Umm Sulaym see *ibid.*, Vol. VIII (ed. C. Brockelmann) (Leiden, 1904), pp. 310–18.
3. See, for instance, Genesis 4:25: 'And Adam knew his wife again and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said "God has appointed me another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him"'; 2 Samuel 12:24: 'Then David comforted his wife Batsheba (on the death of their first son) and lay with her; and she bore a son and called his name Solomon.'

For the Middle Ages see, for example, Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, p. 206: 'My fellow-sponsor, Alazais Munier, says Guillaume Austatz, *bayle* of Ormolac, was sad; in a short time she had lost all her four sons. Seeing her desolate, I asked her the cause. "How could I be other than unhappy", she asked, "after having lost four fine children in so short a time?" "Don't be upset", I said to her, "you will get them back again". "Yes, in Paradise!" "No, you will get them back again in this world. For you are still young. You will be pregnant again...".'

4. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-aqīqa*, *bāb* 1.
5. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-adab*, report 23.
6. See above, Chapter 3.
7. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-janā'iz*, *bāb* 41; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. III, p. 105; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, Vol. VIII, p. 316. [Ibn Sa'd I: *ibid.*, p. 315; Ibn Sa'd II: *ibid.*, p. 316; Ibn Sa'd III: *ibid.*, pp. 316–17; Ibn Sa'd IV: *ibid.*, p. 317; Ibn Sa'd V: *ibid.*, p. 318].
8. The English translation is partly based on *The Translation of the Meaning of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* by Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān (Beirut, 1985), Vol. VII, pp. 273–4.
9. Elsewhere, Abū Ṭalḥa is described by Ibn Sa'd as a strict Muslim who used to fast continually for long periods. See *Ṭabaqāt*, Vol. III/2, p. 65.
10. In Ibn Sa'd V, Abū Ṭalḥa's wife, who was previously married to Mālik b. al-Naḍr, and at that time gave birth to Anas b. Mālik, is called Umm Anas.
11. According to Ibn Sa'd I and II, this question is asked later, after the supper; according to Ibn Sa'd III, the question is not asked at all.
12. In al-Bukhārī II and Ibn Sa'd V the supper is not mentioned.
13. The translation of the allegory is based on Ibn Ḥanbal. In the other sources mentioned above, slight differences of this version can be found.
14. Qur'ān, 2:156.
15. According to Ibn Sa'd I, Abū Ṭalḥa left for the Prophet immediately after having been informed of the death of his son, without any delay – 'as he is' – that is to say, without washing himself.
16. According to Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Sa'd II, the Prophet blessed Abū Ṭalḥa on meeting him without having been informed of what had happened during the night. According to Ibn Sa'd III, the Prophet was informed but not necessarily by Abū Ṭalḥa.
17. Al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 95.
18. Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Sulwat al-ḥazīn*, fols 14a–14b.
19. Al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, pp. 94–5.
20. Al-Qaysi, *Bard al-akbād*, fol. 174b.

21. Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Sulwat al-ḥazīn*, fols 14b–15a; al-Qaysī, *Bard al-akbād*, fol. 175a.
22. Mentioned by al-Qaysī only.
23. See: H. Lazarus-Yafeh, 'Judaism and Islam: Some aspects of mutual cultural influences' in *Some Religious Aspects of Islam* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 72–89.
24. For a more systematic comparison between the relevant Muslim sources and their Jewish parallels, see A. Gil'adi, 'Ṣabr (steadfastness) of bereaved parents: A motif in medieval Muslim consolation treatises and some parallels in Jewish writings', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 80(1989), pp. 35–48.

8: Infanticide in Medieval Muslim Society

1. M. Dickeman, 'Demographic consequences of infanticide in man', *Review of Ecology and Systematics* 6 (1975), p. 113; DeMause, 'The evolution of childhood', pp. 25–32.
2. Dickeman, *ibid.*, p. 114 [referring to H. Aptekar, *Anjea: Infanticide, Abortion and Contraception in Savage Society* (New York, 1931)]. G. Hawthorn, in *The Sociology of Fertility* (London, 1970), p. 70, refers to Ryder's survey of the three societal types accompanying the main stages of the demographic transition ['Fertility' in P.M. Hauser and O.D. Duncan (eds), *The Study of Population: an Inventory and Appraisal* (Chicago and London, 1959)]. The first is typified by high fertility and mortality, labour-intensive agriculture, and consanguineal familism. In such societies, fertility is controlled by various combinations of infanticide, abortion and abstinence. See also Cameron, 'The exposure of children in Greek ethics', pp. 105–14, esp. 107–8; Harris, 'The theoretical possibility of extensive infanticide in the Graeco-Roman world', pp. 114–16; Eyben, 'Family planning in Graeco-Roman antiquity', pp. 14–16; E. Coleman, 'Infanticide in the early Middle Ages', in S.M. Stuard (ed.), *Women in Medieval Society* (Philadelphia, 1976), pp. 47–70, esp. 57, 59; W.L. Langer, 'Infanticide: A historical survey', *History of Childhood Quarterly – The Journal of Psychohistory*, 1(1974), pp. 353–65, esp. 353–5. Ransel (*Mothers of Misery*, p. 11), explains the advantages of infanticide, as a population control measure, from the point of view of people in pre-modern societies living in subsistence economies with high mortality rates:

By exercising control at the end point of the reproductive process, they maintain sufficient fertility to assure population replacement and yet are able to trim the number of infants in response to periodic subsistence crises. As contrasted with abortion, infanticide has the additional advantage of providing greater protection for the mother's life. It also allows families to select the sex of offspring and to remove weak, crippled, or deformed products.

See also pp. 4, 6, and Chapter 2 ('Illegitimacy and infanticide in early modern Russia').

3. Dickeman, *ibid.*, p. 116. See also: DeMause, *ibid.*, p. 25; M.W. Piers, *Infanticide* (New York, 1978), pp. 13–43; E. A. Wrigley, *Population and History* (New York and Toronto, 1969), pp. 42–3.

4. C. Ford, 'A comparative study of human reproduction', *Yale Univ. Publ. Anthropol.*, 3(1945), p. 47 (cited by Dickeman, *ibid.*, p. 115).
5. DeMause, *ibid.*, pp. 26, 28, and see note 2 above.
6. Lyman, 'Barbarism and religion', p. 90 (see also p. 84); Radin, 'The exposure of infants', p. 339, and see above, Chapter 6.
7. Coleman, *ibid.*, pp. 57, 59-60; Mclaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', pp. 120-1.
8. Piers, *Infanticide*, pp. 44-5.
9. On infanticide in pre-Islamic times and early Islam according to the Qur'ān and later sources (for instances, al-Ṭabari's *Ta'rikh*, Ibn Hishām's *Sira*, al-Azraqi's *Ta'rikh Makka*), see J. Chelhod, *Le sacrifice chez les Arabes* (Paris, 1955), pp. 97-100; Motzki, 'Das Kind', pp. 392-8. On the sacrifice of children as part of the religious cults in pre-Islamic Arabia, see, for example, J. Henninger, 'Menschenopfer bei den Arabern', *Anthropos*, 53(1958), especially 753-7; on the sacrifice of new-born children in the ancient Semitic civilisations, see W.R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (New York, 1969), pp. 688-90. See also R. Levy, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Islam* (London, 1933), Vol. I, pp. 131-3.
10. W.M. Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān* (Edinburgh, 1970), pp. 206-11.
11. Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, p. 431.
12. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, s.v. 'wa'd'.
13. Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab al-muḥiṭ* (Beirut, 1970), s.v. 'wa'd': '... *Wa-minhum man kāna ya'idu al-banīna 'inda al-majā'a*'.
14. Pickthall, *ibid.*, p. 206.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
16. See Ismā'īl Abū al-Fidā' Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm* (Cairo, n.d.), Vol. III, p. 38 (commentary on Qur'ān 17:31).
17. I. Lichtenstadter, 'A note on the *gharāniq* and related Qur'ānic problems', *Israel Oriental Studies* 5(1975), pp. 58-9. I wish to thank Professor Y. Friedmann for drawing my attention to this article.
18. See also Qur'ān 17:32, 33.
19. Pickthall, *ibid.*, p. 397.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-9. See also Qur'ān, 43:17, and see W.R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (London, 1903), pp. 291-5.
21. Pickthall, *ibid.*, p. 118.
22. See also: Motzki, *ibid.*
23. See, for instance, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. IV, p. 246: '*Qāla Rasūl Allāh ṣal'am: "Inna Allāh kariha lakum thalāth^{an}: Qīla wa-qāla wa-kathrata al-sū'āl wa-idā'ata al-māl. Wa-ḥarrama 'alaykum Rasūl Allāh ṣal'am wa'da al-banāt wa-uqūqa al-ummahāt...*'. See also *ibid.*, pp. 251, 254, 255, Vol. V, pp. 313, 314, 320; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-aqḍiyya*, bāb 12, 14; Abū Muḥammad 'Abdallāh al-Dārimī, *Sunan* (Medina, 1966), *Kitāb al-riqāq*, bāb 38; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-istiqrāḍ*, bāb 19, *Kitāb al-adab*, bāb 6. For ḥadīth reports in praise of saving the life of female infants see, for instance, Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. IV, p. 147: '*Qāla (Rasūl Allā ṣal'am): "Man satara mu'min^{an} kāna ka-man aḥyā maw'ūdai^{an} min qabrihā"*'. And see also *ibid.*, pp. 153, 158.
24. See, for instance, Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. V, p. 58; al-Manbijī, *Tasliyat ahl al-maṣā'ib*, p. 107.

25. See, for instance, Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan, Kitāb al-sunna, bāb 17*: '...*al-wā'ida wa-al-maw'ūda fī al-nār*'.
26. Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, *Kitāb al-umm* (Bulaq, 1321/1903-4), part VI, pp. 2-3.
27. Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-aṣl* (Haydarabad, 1393/1973), Vol. IV, part II, p. 464; Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh*, Vol. IV, p. 89; Abu Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn 'Alī, *Kitāb al-khilāf fī al-fiqh* (Tehran, 1382/1962-3), Vol. II, p. 343; al-Sarakhsī, *Kitāb al-mabsūṭ*, Vol. XXVII, p. 84.
28. See, for instance, Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī*, Vol. IX, pp. 359-61, 373-4; Ibrahim b. 'Alī b. Yūsuf al-Fayrūzābādī al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muḥadhdhab fī fiqh madhhab al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī* (Cairo n.d.), Vol. II, p. 174.
29. Musallam, *Sex and Society in Islam*, pp. 18, 19.
30. See below.
31. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, 1320/1902-3), Vol. VIII, p. 30 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:137), p. 35 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:140), Vol. XV, p. 54 (commentary on Qur'ān 17:31); Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl* (Beirut, 1966), part II, p. 72 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:140); 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl* (ed. H.O. Fleischer) (Leipzig, 1846), Vol. I, p. 311 (commentary on the same verse), Vol. II, p. 329 (commentary on Qur'ān 60:12); Abū 'Alī al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, 1379/1959-60), Vol. VI, p. 413 (commentary on Qur'ān 17:31). Interestingly enough, in some *ḥadīth* reports cited by the exegetes to support their commentary, *qatl al-awlād* is explained as *wa'd al-awlād* (in general!). See: al-Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 30, Vol. XV, p. 54.
32. See note 36 below (al-Qurṭubī's commentary on Qur'ān 6:151).
33. Such was the tendency also in the Greco-Roman world, in medieval Europe, and in pre-modern Russia. See Langer, 'Infanticide: A historical Survey', p. 353; Harris, 'The theoretical possibility of extensive infanticide', p. 114; McLaughlin, 'Survivors and surrogates', p. 120; Ransel, *Mothers of Misery*, pp. 19, 130.
34. Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, Vol. VIII, p. 56 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:151, where infanticide in times of famine is presented as an act of mercy); Ma'mar b. al-Muthannā Abū 'Ubayda, *Majāz al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, 1954), Vol. I, p. 208 (commentary on the same verse); al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, Vol. I, p. 538 (commentary on Qur'ān 17:31); Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-aẓīm*, Vol. IV, p. 354 (commentary on Qur'ān 60:12).
35. See, for instance, al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl*, part II, pp. 69, 70 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:138): '*Wa-kānā al-rajul fī al-jāhiliyya yaḥlifū la-in wulida lahu ghuḷām^m la-yanḥaranna aḥadahuḥum...*'; Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, 1381/1962), Vol. VII, p. 91 (commentary on the same verse).
36. Al-Qurṭubī, *ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 132 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:151): '*Qawṭuḥu ta'ālā "wa-lā taqtulū awlādakum min imlāq^m"... wa-qad kāna minḥum man yaf'alu dhālika bi-al-ināth wa-al-dhukūr khashyata al-faqr kamā huwa zahīru al-āya*'; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-aẓīm*, Vol. II, p. 188

(commentary on the same verse): 'Wa-ruḥḥamā qatalū ba'd al-dhukūr khashyata al-iftiqār...'. See also: Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, s.v. 'wa'd': 'Wa-minhum man kāna ya'idu al-banīna 'inda al-majā'a wa-kānat Kinda ta'idu al-banāl'.

37. See note 34 above.
38. Wensinck, *Concordance et indices*, s.v. 'wa'd'; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, s.v. 'wa'd'. See also: Musallam, *Sex and Society in Islam*, p. 19.
39. See, for instance, Qur'ān, 18:46; 34:35-7, 64:14-15.
40. Musallam, *ibid.*, p. 37.
41. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. III, p. 478; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, Vol. IV, p. 477 (commentary on Qur'ān 81:8-9). See below, Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwā* on a mother who killed her ailing son. Cases of murder of male infants initiated by women who were rival wives of the infants' mothers in contemporary Egypt are described in Atiya's *Khul-Khaal*, pp. 129-32.
42. Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, Vol. XXX, p. 40. See also: Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, Vol. IV, p. 478; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'* (Cairo, 1287/1870-71), p. 205.
43. Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Vol. XIX, pp. 232-3 (commentary on Qur'ān 81:8-9). See also: al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, Vol. I, p. 311 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:140), where a different reading is suggested: 'qatalū' instead of 'qatalū' to emphasise the vast number of the victims. The figures mentioned in these narrations are not necessarily accurate. However, they might be taken as an indication that in times of economic pressure infanticide was widely practised, although generally the regulation of population was affected by high mortality rates, particularly of infants and children. See Hawthorn, *The Sociology of Fertility*, p. 47.
44. Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, Vol. VIII, p. 35 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:141).
45. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, p. 205.
46. Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, part II, p. 708. See also al-Ṭabarsī, *Majmā' al-bayān*, Vol. VI, p. 367, Vol. X, p. 444; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Vol. VII, p. 91, Vol. XIX, pp. 232-3. And see Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 291-5.
47. Al-Zamakhsharī, *ibid.*; Smith, *ibid.*
48. Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī al-Makkī, *al-Fatāwā al-fiqhiyya al-kubrā* (Cairo, 1358/1939-40), Vol. IV, p. 220.
49. Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, Vol. VIII, p. 56 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:151). On another dramatic measure taken by Arabs in pre-Islamic times and apparently even later in periods of want, namely, *i'tifād*, starving oneself to death, 'the final resort of those proud tribal people frustrated and despairing, but unflinching in their resolve to die rather than beg', see R. B. Serjeant, 'Famine death without loss of honour in ancient Arabia and Yemeni *Arḥab*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 50(1987), pp. 527-8.
50. See above, and also al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Vol. VII, p. 132 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:151). See also Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-nikāḥ*, *bāb* 141; Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Yazīd Ibn Māja, *Sunan* (Cairo, n.d.), *Kitāb al-nikāḥ*, *bāb* 61; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. VI, pp. 361, 434.
51. Ibn Ḥanbal, *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 33, 51.

52. Musallam, *Sex and Society in Islam*, Ch. 1.
53. Ibid., pp. 57-71. On the use of various abortifacient methods by Muslim women, see, for instance, Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'at fatāwā*, Vol. IV, pp. 182; 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Sa'īd Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥallā* (Beirut, n.d.), Vol. XI, pp. 29-31; Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, Vol. IV, p. 109; Muḥammad Kāmil b. Muṣṭafā al-Ḥanafī al-Ṭarābulusī, *al-Fatāwā al-kāmiliyya fī al-ḥawādith al-Ṭarābulusiyya* (n.p., 1313/1895-6), p. 249. On the penalty for abortion and for causing abortion, see, for instance, Ibn Taymiyya, *ibid.*, p. 188; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Aḥkām al-nisā'*, pp. 376-7. I would like to thank Professor R. B. Serjeant for drawing my attention to a Yemeni manuscript (an acephalous MS of Ibn Zinbā') from c. 500/1105 whose contents represent a Jāhili tradition of tribal law. The manuscript deals, *inter alia*, with the penalty of 'women who do something to themselves of a nature to cause the abortion of a boy from their womb, by drinking a potion or something else, or massage which causes the boy to be aborted'.
54. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, Vol. II, p. 65. The English translation is based on Farah, *Marriage and Sexuality in Islam*, pp. 109-10. see also Musallam, *ibid.*, pp. 17-18, 22-3.
55. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Aḥkām al-nisā'*, p. 374: '*Fa-idhā ta'ammadat isqāṭa mā fihī al-rūḥ kāna ka-qatlī mu'min wa-qad qāla ta'ālā: "Wa-idhā al-mā'wūdātu su'ilat bi-ayyi dhanbīn qutilat"*'.
56. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, Vol. IV, p. 354; al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-bayān*, Vol. IX, p. 275: '*"Wa-lā yaznīna wa-lā yaqtulna awlādahunna" 'alā wajhīn min al-unjūh, lā bi-al-wa'd wa-lā bi-al-isqāṭ*'.
57. Musallam, *Sex and Society in Islam*, p. 118, and see also p. 19.
58. See Langer (n. 2 above), Radin (n. 6 above), and McLaughlin, 'Survivors and Surrogates', p. 121.
59. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Aḥkām al-nisā'*, pp. 374-5.
60. '*Wa-idhā kāna Allāh qad harramanā qatla al-awlād mā'a al-ḥāja wa-khashyati al-faqr, fa-la-an yuharrima qatlahu bi-dūni dhālika awlā wa-aḥrā*'. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'at fatāwā*, Vol. IV, p. 182.
61. Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, Vol. I, p. 518. According to an interpretation presented by al-Qurṭubī, *dassa* (to trample...into the dust) means not to bury the female infant alive but only to hide her out of shame ('*ikhfā'uhā 'an al-nās ḥattā lā tu'rafa'*). Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Vol. X, p. 117.
62. Al-Qurṭubī, *ibid.* See also al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-bayān*, Vol. VI, p. 367.
63. Al-Qurṭubī, *ibid.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 232-3 (commentary on Qur'ān 81:8-9); al-Ṭabarsī, *ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 371 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:137).
64. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, Vol. IV, p. 477 (commentary on Qur'ān 81:8-9).
65. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 10-13: '*Fī karāhati tasakhkhuṭ al-banāt*'; al-Qaysī, *Bard al-akbād*, fol. 166a, where Dā'ūd b. Abī Hind is accused of desiring the death of his daughter ('*kunta tatamannā mawtahā*'). On names expressing disappointment, given to new-born females by Muslim parents see Schimmel, *Islamic Names*, p. 42.
66. B. D. Miller, *The Endangered Sex* (Ithaca, New York and London, 1981), p. 42 (see also pp. 43-4); Wrigley, *Population and History*, p. 43.

67. Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, Vol. II, pp. 69, 70. See also al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Vol. VII, p. 91; al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, Vol. I, p. 310, and nn. 9, 35 above.
68. The same pagan parents who sacrifice their children to gods are described in the Bible by the prophet Ezekiel as loving parents: 'For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into My sanctuary to Profane it' (Ezekiel 23:39); 'And you son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their stronghold, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and the yearning of their soul, their sons and their daughters...' (ibid., 24:25).
69. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, p. 75.
70. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ahkām al-nisā'*, p. 380, and see also p. 373.
71. Al-Qaysi, *Bard al-akbād*, fols 171b-172a. See also al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ihtifāl bi-mawt al-atfāl*, fol. 9a; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, p. 305: 'Tamannī mawt al-awlād'.
72. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 36.
73. Al-Madā'inī, *Kitāb al-tā'zī*, p. 17: 'Al-ḥamdu li-Allāh... nālū al-fawz wa-ḥāmu al-dhimāra'; p. 18: a similar narration about a father who lost two of his sons as martyrs on two different occasions and yet praised God each time the bad news was brought to him. 'Al-ḥamdu li-Allāh alladhī ja'ala min ṣulbī man uṣība shahīd^{an}'.
74. Ibid., p. 20.
75. Ibid., p. 23, and see also p. 43. For similar reports see Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Sulwat al-Ḥazīn*, fols 10b, 11a.
76. Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, Vol. I, p. 311 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:140); al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, Vol. II, p. 72 (commentary on the same verse); al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Vol. VII, pp. 96-7 (commentary on the same verse: 'Wa-kāna minhum man yaqtuluhu [waladahu] safah^{an} bi-ghayr ḥujja minhum fī qatlihim wa-hum Rabi' a wa-Muḍar kānū yaqtulūna banātahum li-ajli al-ḥamiyyati').
77. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, Vol. II, p. 188 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:151): 'Sa'ala [ʿAbdallāh b. Ma'sūd] Rasūla Allāhi ṣal' am: "ayyu al-dhanb a'zam?" Qāla: "An taj'ala li-Allāh nidd^{an} wa-huwa khāliquka", Qultu: "Thumma ayyu?" Qāla: "An taqtula waladaka khashyata an ya'fama ma'aka". See also Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Fatāwā Rasūl Allāh* (Cairo, 1980), p. 183.
78. Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān*. Vol. VII, pp. 96-7 (commentary on Qur'ān 6:140).
79. Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, Vol. XIV, p. 76 (commentary on Qur'ān 16:57-9); al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-bayān*, Vol. VI, p. 367 (commentary on the same verse).
80. Al-Ṭabarī, ibid.; al-Ṭabarsī, ibid. See also al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, Vol. II, pp. 233-4 (commentary on Qur'ān 42:49-50). For reports praising girls, see Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-mawdūd*, pp. 10-13.
81. For reports on Ṣaṣ'a'a, al-Farazdaq's grandfather, see, for instance, al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Vol. XIX, pp. 232-3 (commentary on Qur'ān 81:8-9). For a similar report on Zayd b. ʿAmr b. Nufayl, see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb manāqib al-anṣār*, bāb 24.
82. Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwatta'*, pp. 163, 164; Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan*, *Kitāb al-*

jihād, *bāb* 111; al-Dārimī, *Sunan*, *Kitāb al-siyar*, *bāb* 25. In some of these *ḥadīth* reports, however, the Prophet is said to have allowed the killing of the enemy's families before he took the unequivocal decision to forbid this. The criterion used to distinguish between a child and an adult is given in *Sunan al-Dārimī*, *Kitāb al-siyar*, *bāb* 26: '*Fa-man anbata al-sha'ra qutila wa-man lam yunbit turika*'.

83. Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' fatāwā* (Riyad, 1382/1962-3), Vol. XVI, p. 80.
84. See Cameron, 'The exposure of children and Greek ethics', p. 105; Wrigley, *Population and History*, p. 126.
85. See note 68 above.
86. Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, pp. 49-50.
87. See above, Chapter 6.

9: Conclusion

1. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 125.
2. *EF*², Vol. III, pp. 16-19 (s.v. 'Ḥaḍāna').
3. *EF*², Vol. I, p. 993 (s.v. 'Bāligh').
4. Ibn Sida, *Kitāb al-mukhaṣṣaṣ*, part I, p. 34.
5. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, pp. 316-17.
6. Ibn Sida, *ibid.*, part I, pp. 30-4.
7. Motzki, 'Das Kind', pp. 408-11, 417-22.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 439.

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